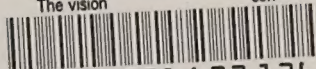


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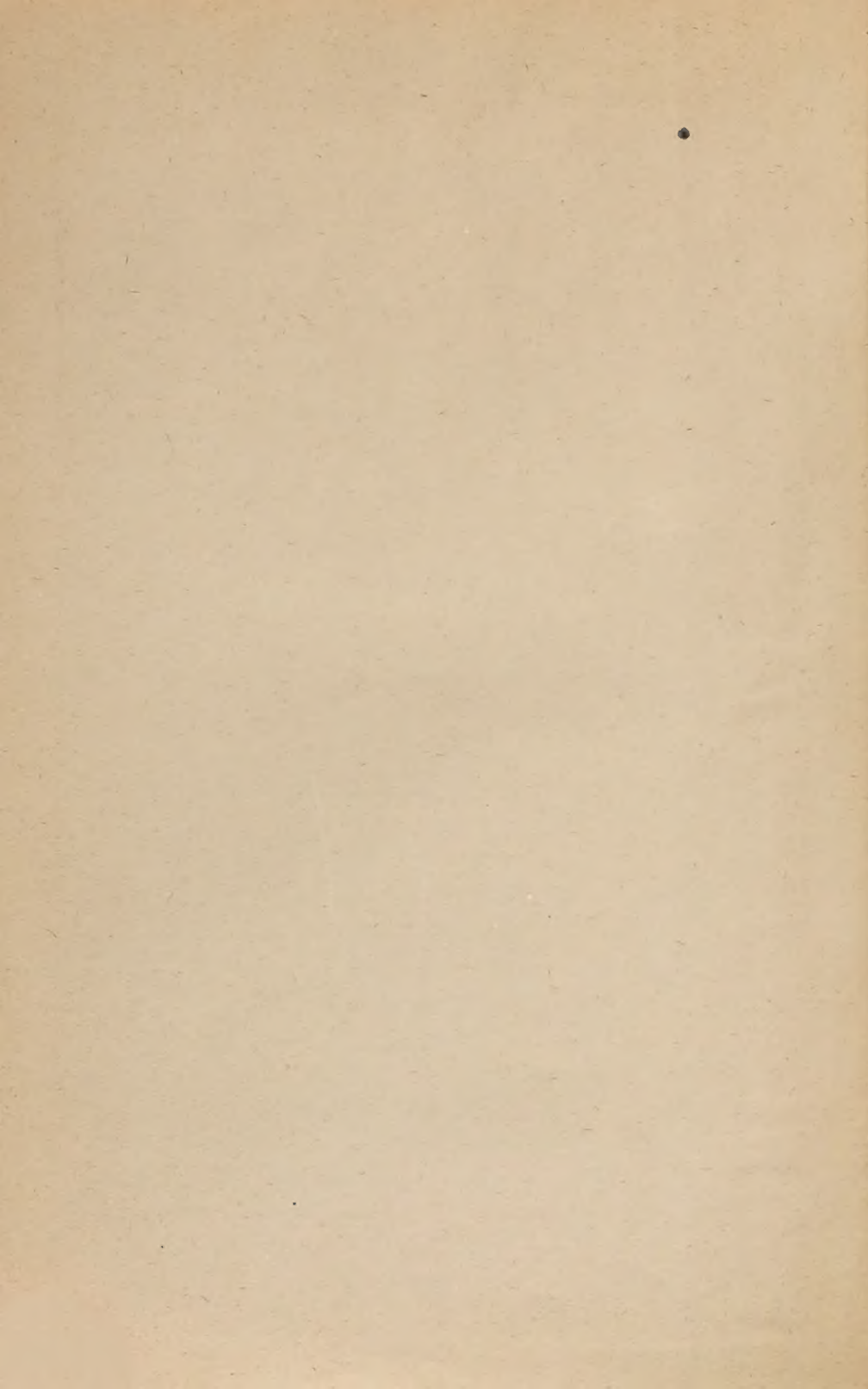
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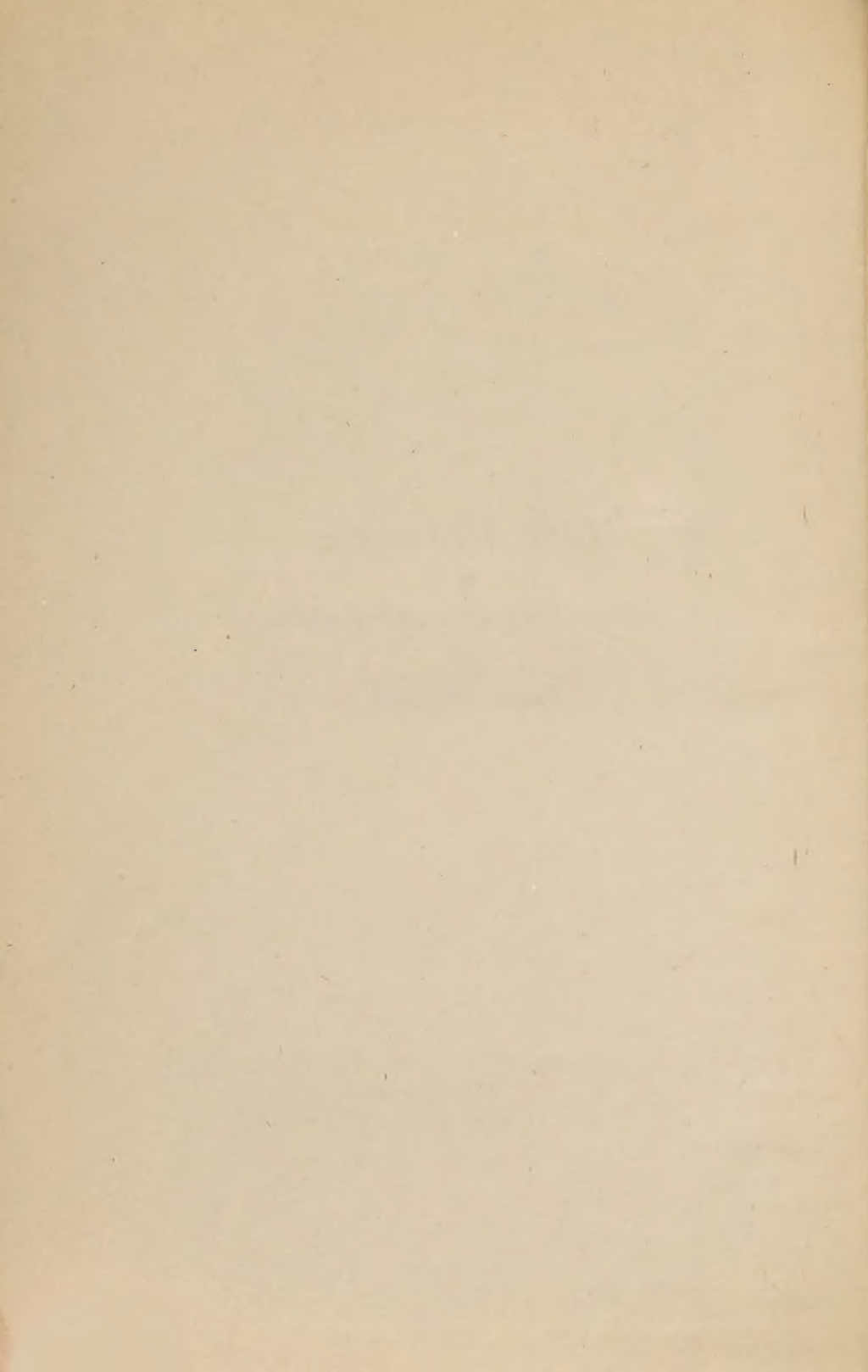
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THE VISION;
or
Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso
of
Dante Alighieri



THE VISION;
or
Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso
of
Dante Alighieri

Translated by
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Preface

THE author of the following translation into English of Dante's *Divina Commedia* was David James MacKenzie, Advocate, F.S.A.Scot., formerly Sheriff-Substitute at Lerwick, Wick, Kilmarnock and Glasgow, who died at Elgin, his native place, on 27th May, 1925. His literary gifts were first recognised outside the circle of his friends by his writing a brilliant and charming play, entitled *The Bachelor of Florence*. This was very successfully performed in Edinburgh (1885) for the benefit of the University Union. Apart from this his literary output during his life did not extend beyond the publication of a volume of lectures, *By-ways among Books* (1900), *Poems* (1920), and contributions to the volumes issued by the Glasgow Ballad Club (1908-1924). For some years before his death he was engaged on the translation of Dante which is here given, and which he left in a form ready for publication. It now appears exactly as it left his hands. He was desirous to give an English reader unacquainted with Italian a vivid impression of the qualities and beauties of the great poem, and so chose a metre and a scheme of rhymes closely corresponding to those of the original. How far he has succeeded in accomplishing his desire it is for the reader to decide. It will be noticed that he has given no explanatory notes on the poem. It is to be presumed that Dante students are already provided with all the notes they need. Others

PREFACE

may find the same in any of the current translations which may be readily obtained. My own labour in connexion with the publication of this volume, undertaken at the desire of the author's widow, has not extended beyond the mere correction of proofs, in which I have received help from the Rev. Archibald Jamieson, of Dumfries, and my son, Dr. M. E. Willcock, of Leeds. My affection and respect for the author have transformed this labour into a pleasure.

JOHN WILLCOCK, D.LITT.

LERWICK, SHETLAND.

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I N F E R N O C A N T O I

In life's mid journey, as I went my way,
I found myself within a gloomy wood.
I could not see the path, nor where it lay.
Striving to tell how close the forest stood,
how rough the thicket, all my heart with dread
trembles, and such a horror holds my blood
As from the fear of death itself is shed.
and yet, to show the good that there I found,
I tell of things I then discovered.
I know not how I reached that fearful ground,
but so had I been filled with dreams and sleep,
when I had lost the path, that, wandering round,
I found myself beneath a mountain steep,
rising beyond the shadows of the vale
whose terrors in my heart had sunk so deep.
I looked above, and, on its slopes, a veil
of splendour lay of that good planet's light
that leads all men aright by hill or dale.
My heart was lifted from the sore affright
that like a cloud upon its depths had lain,
weighing me down with woe the livelong night :
And, as a swimmer, struggling with the pain
of labouring breath, when he the shore has won,
looks on the fury of the raging main,
Even so my soul, that, in its fear, would shun
such memories, on that strait its musing bent
through whose dark shade there comes, alive,—not one.
After a moment, resting, I had spent,
wearied, I held again the lonely way,
my right foot ever lower in th' ascent.
Where, from the plain the mountain sloped away,
behold, a nimble panther, swift of foot,
clad in a spotted skin before me lay.
She fled not, but, athwart my path, the brute
obstructed so my journey that I stayed
my steps, as though to turn, irresolute.

INFERNO

It was at dawn. The sun was new arrayed 37
 in rising glory, and about him hung
 the early stars that Love Divine had made
 Firstlings of beauty when the world was young. 40
 so all about me made for hopefulness,—
 that panther's gaudy skin,—the dawn new-sprung,
 The earth arrayed in summer's lovely dress. 43
 and yet it was not so : for dire affright
 assailed me, and my terror was no less
 To find a lion fronting me. Forthright 46
 he came with head erect, and hungering maw
 as though to fright the air. Then, in my sight
 There came a she-wolf fierce, who seemed to draw 49
 her leanness from the power of her desire.
 hundreds lie mangled by her cruel jaw.
 Such weight of horror seized me, from the fire 52
 and fearful aspect of her horrible face,
 that all my hope was lost of mounting higher
 As comes the time of losing wealth and place 55
 swiftly to one who grasps at everything,
 and he is plunged in sorrow and disgrace,
 So that fierce beast, for ever hungering, 58
 and drawing towards me, neither loth nor slow,
 drove me to where no light was lingering.
 When thus I stumbled to the place below, 61
 I came on one who spoke with husky throat
 hoarse through long silence. I was fain to know
 My fellow-traveller in this desert spot. 64
 "Have pity on me," cried I, "whether man,
 like me, you are, in human flesh, or not."
 "Man was I once," he said, "when life began, 67
 but such I am no more. On either side,
 of Lombard parents,—both were Mantuan.
 Born ere great Julius' fortunes reached full tide, 70
 in Rome, beneath Augustus' majesty,
 in times when there were priests of gods that lied.
 I was a singer, and my poetry 73
 told of Anchises' pious son who, from
 proud Ilium's burning, fled across the sea.

INFERNO

- Why to such troubles do you backward come ? 76
 why do you scale not yonder height in view
 which of all joy to us is centre and home ? ”
- “ Are you, then, Virgil ? ” cried I, “ tell me true. 79
 are you that beauteous fountain of sweet speech ? ”
 —I spoke to him with cheek of bashful hue.—
- “ Oh, glory and light of poets, I beseech 82
 your favour from the zeal that filled my heart
 to learn the beauties that your writings teach.
- You are my Master, by whose sovereign art 85
 my spirit has been taught and edified
 in poetry to take an honoured part.
- Behold the Beast that turned my steps aside : 88
 help me, oh wise and honoured one. I flee
 with beating heart and pulses, terrified.”
- “ Another journey calls you,” then said he, 91
 when that he saw my eyes with tears were fraught.
 “ If you would from this savage place win free.
- This Beast is wicked, and she suffers not 94
 mortals to pass her, but with force and guile,
 full many a one to bitter death has brought.
- Her nature is so savage and so vile, 97
 desire once fed, grows with satiety,
 and leaves her hungrier still. Yet, for a while,
- With other beasts she mingles,—so will she,— 100
 till he, that mighty Greyhound comes, whose spring,
 sudden will lay her low in agony.
- No lands nor pelf he’ll gain, nor anything 103
 save Wisdom, Love, and Virtue : and his sway
 from Feltro unto Feltro widening,
- Shall prove poor Italy’s safeguard and stay, 106
 for whom the maid Camilla died, for whom
 Turnus, Euryalus, Nisus wounded lay.
- Nor shall he cease driving her to her doom, 109
 until she lies in Hell, whence Envy chose
 to set her free from the eternal gloom.
- And as for you this project I propose, 112
 that you shall follow me as I shall lead
 your steps to an abode of endless woes.

INFERNO

- There you shall hear the shrieking of the dead, 115
those ancient ghosts who, in their dire distress
for second death their hopeless tears have shed.
- Some you shall see still fed with hopefulness 118
that o'er such fiery torment may prevail
and bring them yet to final happiness.
- Whereto, if you aspire, there shall not fail 121
a worthier Guide when me my fate constrains
to leave you, nor those loftier heights to scale.
- For my revolt this punishment remains. 124
He who, above, is Emperor and Lord
wills not that I should enter where He reigns.
- For He, whose power is everywhere adored, 127
there has His City and His lofty Throne :
oh, happy he, called thither by His word ! ”
- “ Oh, Poet,” then, I called in eager tone, 130
“ by that same God whose doom controls your fate,
although His goodness was to you unknown,
- Lead me,—for I have fear of eviller state,— 133
to where Saint Peter’s Gateway I may see,
and these sad spirits so disconsolate.”
- Then moved we on, my Guide preceding me. 136

INFERNO CANTO II

The day wore onward, and the darkling air 1
 soothed all the mortal souls on earth that were
 save mine alone : for then I seemed to fare
 Ready for conflict, an adventurer. 4
 that journey long, and all its pitifulness,
 I shall relate, and memory shall not err.
 O Muses, aid my genius to express 7
 the things which you, O Memory, have seen :
 my humble tale in all your glory dress.
 Thus I began, " O Poet, you have been 10
 my Guide. Consider if my worth avails
 for this high journey. Am I not too mean ?
 Long since I learned from your wondrous tales 13
 that Silvius' noble father, mortal still,
 entered the regions where no death prevails.
 Yet, if the Almighty Enemy of Ill 16
 such favour showed him, knowing his race to come,
 and the proud destiny they should fulfil,
 No wonder that from that empyreal dome 19
 this father should, through time, be chosen to sway
 the imperial splendours of magnanimous Rome.
 Which all are builded up, the truth to say, 22
 a holy place, wherein Saint Peter's throne
 and his successors' might remain for aye.
 He in that journey which your praise has won 25
 learned that which led him on to victory
 and gave his race the papal robe to don.
 Thither the Chosen Vessel went to try 28
 to find assurance for his faith, the true
 and only road men find salvation by.
 But I,—why do I hither come ? And through 31
 whose favour ? No Æneas, I, nor Paul.
 nor am I held as such in others' view.
 If then I hesitate, it is lest all 34
 this enterprise to foolishness descends.
 you know me better than myself. I call

INFERNO

For guidance." Like to one who now intends, 37
 and now forsakes, and, altering fitfully
 his first-formed purposes to other ends,
 With thought on this dark coast weighed down was I, 40
 my enterprise consumed in musings vain
 that was at first embraced so eagerly.

"If to my mind your meaning is made plain," 43
 replied the Shade magnanimous, "your soul
 within it doth that cowardice contain
 Which many a time drives backward from its goal 46
 the human spirit on high adventure bent,
 as beasts are scared by shadows while they prowl.

That you may gain fresh courage, my intent 49
 I now will tell you,—wherefore I come, and how
 my heart moved when I heard your first lament.

Some shades suspended hang, 'twixt high and low, 52
 among them I. A Lady fair called me
 to whose commandments I was fain to bow.

Her eyes shone with the Star's refulgency. 55
 in low, sweet voice began the lovely Dame,
 whose words were of angelic purity :

'O gentle soul of Mantua, whose name 58
 through all the world is now established sure
 for ever,—such the splendour of your fame,—

A friend of mine, who knows not fortune's lure, 61
 in a wild waste is so beset with fear
 that its lone terrors he can not endure,

And fain would turn him back : nor is it clear 64
 that I in time for his escape have come
 from tidings which in heaven have reached my ear.

Help him with your poetic masterdom 67
 of ornate words,—help him, and bring him rest,
 and comfort me within my heavenly home :

For I am Beatrice,—and love confessed 70
 has brought me here, and led me this to say,
 though I would fain return among the blest.

When with my Lord I am, I shall essay 73
 often to praise your name.' Such her words were,
 and as she ceased, I answered in this way :

INFERNO

O Lady, thou whose native virtue dear 76
 mankind with excellencies doth endow
 more than all things which fill heaven's smallest sphere,
 So your command doth please me that, if, now, 79
 it were performed, I yet would seem remiss,
 no need your wish to let me further know.
 But tell me, Lady, what the reason is 82
 that you to this low centre down should hie
 while burning to regain heaven's ampler bliss ? '
 Since you have questioned me so eagerly, 85
 I shall in few words tell you why I roam
 through such a place as this is, fearlessly.
 Fear comes alone from hurtful things : for some 88
 have power to injure others and do wrong :
 others have not,—nor terrible become.
 God made me, of His goodness, that, among 91
 the miseries of man I walk unharmed,—
 no flame thence reaches me with scorching tongue.
 In heaven a noble Lady dwells : alarmed 94
 by this unhappy chance of which I told,
 she even the Almighty's awful judgment charmed
 To help him. She to Lucia did unfold 97
 her purpose :—' He, thy servant, seeks thine aid,
 for whom thy help I crave.' Then Lucia, bold
 To counter cruelty, a movement made 100
 to where I was by ancient Rachel's side.
 ' O Beatrice, true Praise of God,' she said,
 ' Why something for his aid have you not tried 103
 who you so dearly loves, and leaving all,
 from vulgar company has drawn aside ?
 Do you not hear his lamentable call ? 106
 his bitter fight with Death do you not see
 by waters which into no ocean fall ? '
 No one in all the world could swifter be 109
 to seize on profit, or from ill to fly
 than I, descending when she spoke to me,
 From that blest place of my felicity, 112
 trusting that genius which has brought you fame
 and honours to your hearers.' Lovingly

INFERNO

She ceased and turned away from me the flame 115
 that shone within her pitying eyes, whose fire
 a fresh incentive to your aid became.
 Thus have I come, fulfilling her desire. 118
 from that dread brute your spirit I released,
 driven from the Mount to which your hopes aspire.
 Why do you pause ? Why has your journey ceased ?
 why harbour such vile fear ? Does it not lend 122
 you boldness,—is your courage not increased
 When three such blessed Ladies condescend 124
 in heaven, to comfort you with help and cheer,
 and I foretell your happiness in the end ? ”
 As flowerets chilled amid the night time drear, 127
 hang closed, and yet each slender stem stands crowned
 anew, as the white rays of dawn appear,
 Again I felt my failing strength rebound, 130
 and thus began I, free of spirit once more,
 as one who fresh blood in his heart has found,—
 “ O pitiful Maid, from whom my heart its store 133
 of strength renews, and you who, to my ears,
 so quickly, here, her loving message bore,
 Such sweet desire has now replaced my fears 136
 to tread that path from which I turned me back,
 one will in both our minds there now appears.
 Come, then, let us the perilous task attack. 139
 you are my Guide, my Lord, my Master good.”
 so spoke I : and I moved upon his track,
 Following him forward through the tangled wood. 142

INFERNO CANTO III

“Through me you come to the abode of woe : 1
through me you enter on eternal pain :
through me the companies of lost ones go.
God’s justice did my building here ordain. 4
From Power Divine, and Wisdom without peer,
and Primal Love my being I obtain.
Nothing before me lived save things that were 7
eternal, and eternal I endure :
all hope abandon, ye who enter here.”
These words I saw in lettering obscure, 10
written above the archway of a Gate.
“To me,” I cried, “their meaning is not sure.”
And he, as one, prudent and literate, 13
to me replied, “Here leave your doubts aside,
and here put end to this your timorous state.
We now are in the place where those abide 16
in sufferings that I told you of before :—
to whom the light of knowledge is denied.”
Then as his hand he placed in mine, and o’er 19
his face came gladness, I was comforted,
and onward to that secret place we bore.
There, wailings deep and groans were uttered, 22
and sighs of sadness filled the starless air,
till from my wondering eyes some tears were shed.
Strange tongues, and terrible mutterings were there, 25
and moans of misery, and wrathful cries,
shrieks shrill and hoarse, hand-claspings of despair.
In ceaseless round and dolorous did they rise, 28
driven through that murky gloom that knew no light,
blown, as the dust before the whirlwind flies.
Then I with mind still dark in horror’s night, 31
cried, “Master, what is that which now I hear ?
and who are those in such a doleful plight ?”
Then he, “This woe is theirs who, year by year, 34
lived out their aimless lives, gaining no praise,
seeking no fame,—such find their guerdon here.

INFERNO

Mingled with them a crowd angelic strays 37
 who were not rebels to the Highest, nor gave
 Him faith, but for themselves lived out their days.
 Chased from high heaven whose light they would deprave,
 nor yet in torment have they been restrained 41
 lest Hell might o'er them cause of boasting have."
 I asked, "Why are they all so sadly pained, 43
 and why do they lament so drearily?"
 his answer was in briefest words contained:
 "These have no hope that they will ever die. 46
 lost in such blind abasement they abide,
 they hope for nought that may beyond it lie.
 To them all fame on earth has been denied. 49
 by Mercy and by Justice both, disdained,—
 speak not of them, but look,—and turn aside."
 Then, as my eyes upon the place I strained, 52
 behold, I saw a flag that madly spun,
 and not a moment in repose remained:
 And after it a dense crowd followed on, 55
 a train so vast, I ne'er would have believed
 so many souls had been by death undone.
 Gazing a while upon them, I perceived 58
 the shade of him who, with a coward fear,
 gave up the mighty seat he had received.
 Then to my musing mind it seemed more clear 61
 that those were they on whom the Lord looked down
 displeased, nor were they to His enemies dear.
 These wicked ghosts, who ne'er true life had known, 64
 were naked, and were all assailed by flies
 and wasps, that followed till their cheeks had grown
 Bloody with wounds, and their unhappy eyes 67
 mingled the blood with tears: while, at their feet,
 worms lapped the outflow of their miseries.
 And then, beyond, I saw a company meet 70
 about the margin of a mighty stream.
 I cried, "O master, why are those so fleet
 In hastening to cross over as they seem 73
 to me, although the light be dim and grey?
 why is their wish for crossing so extreme?"

INFERNO

Then he to me, "The cause I shall display 76
 when we our wandering footsteps shall have brought
 on the sad shores of Acheron to stay."

With downcast eyes I went, for, then, I thought 79
 I had offended him, and, till beside
 the stream we stood, I travelled, speaking nought.

There, on a boat upon the river's tide 82
 an old man, white with years, came towards us fast.
 "Woe to you, lost and wicked souls," he cried,

"Hope not to enter heaven, for, at last 85
 I come to bear you over Acheron,
 to where, in fire and ice, your lot is cast.

And you,—a living spirit,—get you gone 88
 from these dead shades!" But when he saw that I
 moved not from out the place that I had won,

"Some other way, some other ferry try," 91
 he shouted, "and to reach the further shore,
 some lighter skiff to make your journey by."

Then spoke my Guide to him. "Your fears give o'er,
 Charon, our journey here is ordered well 95
 by Him whose Will is Power,—ask no more."

Then on his shaggy face more calmness fell, 97
 though flaming rings about his eyes were set,
 this pilot of the livid marsh of Hell.

But these sad souls, naked and desolate, 100
 with chattering teeth, changed colour as it seemed,
 hearing his bitter words attest their fate.

They cursed their God, and all those whom they deemed
 their family and friends,—the human race,— 104
 and each his hour and place of birth blasphemed.

Then all that crowd of souls, in piteous case, 106
 and weeping loudly, towards the margin bore
 which every man who fears not God must face.

Charon, with eyes of fire, upon the shore 109
 gathered them, beckoning with demoniac leer
 and struck each one that lingered with his oar.

As leaf falls after leaf, in Autumn sere, 112
 and the bare boughs see, on the wind-swept floor
 the ravished treasures of the fading year,

INFERNO

So this vile crowd of Adam's race impure 115
 launched itself on the stream by companies
 at signal, like a hawk to fowler's lure.
Then on the brown and murky tide went these, 118
 and ere unto the further side they won,
 another crowd had gathered by degrees.
My Master, then, benignly said, "My son, 121
 those dying in the wrath of God at last,
 have come from every land beneath the sun,
And they are fain this river to have passed. 124
 by force of Justice, all divine, their mood
 from terror into longing is recast.
Believe me, that, this way, no spirit good 127
 e'er seeks to pass. If Charon, then, to you
 be wroth, his temper may be understood."
When thus he spoke, the ground of murky hue 130
 trembled so terribly that the memory
 still does my brow with chilly sweat bedew.
From that sad soil, strange wind blasts seemed to fly, 133
 as, through the air, flashed the red lightning's glow.
 I lost my senses, falling suddenly,
As those who quickly into slumber go. 136

I N F E R N O C A N T O I V

From slumber I was wakened suddenly 1
 as the loud thunder all my dreaming broke,
 like one by force from sleep aroused. My eye,
 Now rested by the short repose it took, 4
 I lifted, and stood upward with fixed stare
 to scan the place within which I awoke.
 Then, truly, I discerned before me, there, 7
 the margin of that dolorous abyss
 where gather all the thunders of despair.
 So deep, so dark with clouds, sight went amiss 10
 tracing the gulphs of that infernal tide
 of bottomless gloom. "Our path lies down to this
 Blind realm of woe," began my Poet Guide 13
 with face that blanched with pallor. "I shall go
 before you, do you follow at my side."
 But I who watched his features paling so, 16
 cried, "What of me, if you afraid appear
 from whom alone my help is wont to flow?"
 "The agonies of those who suffer here," 19
 he answered me, "have altered thus my face
 with pity, but I am not moved by fear.
 Here pause we not, but let us move apace." 22
 thus spoke he, and we journeyed on again
 to the First Circle of that awful place.
 Here, to our ears there came no cries of pain, 25
 but, all around, innumerable sighs
 that shook the eternal air of that domain.
 In sadness, without torture, companies 28
 were crowded in community of woe,
 men, women, and their infant families.
 My Guide then spoke,—“Do you not wish to know 31
 what souls these are that you before you see?
 I would you learned before you further go.
 These have not sinned, but all their piety 34
 counts not, for baptism they did not obtain
 which is the Gate of Christianity.

INFERNÔ

- They lived before that faith, and so, in vain, 37
to God their prayers and adoration rose.
in that condition I myself remain.
- No wrong but this was done by me or those : 40
but we are lost for that, doomed but to brood
in longing that no hope for ever knows."
- Grief held me as his words I understood, 43
for there were many worthy whom I knew
in that dim, Limbo-prisoned multitude.
- "Tell me," I cried, "my Master, is it true,— 46
for I in that belief would be assured
which conquers every error,—say if you
- Have known of any one that, here immured, 49
has yet escaped and entered into bliss
by others' or his own deserts procured ? "
- My veiled request he answered, "New to this 52
dread realm I was, when He a visit paid
whose Power ever wreathed with Victory is.
- He drew from hence our father, Adam's shade, 55
Abel's and Noah's, Moses' following,
who lived obedient to the laws he made.
- The patriarch Abraham, David the King, 58
Isaac and Jacob with his long array
of sons, and Rachel, won by labouring.
- Many, besides, to bliss were borne away, 61
and know, that never had these bonds been loosed
to human spirit till that happy day."
- We still kept walking as his speaking closed, 64
rambling on through what seemed a wooded glade
that was of all these crowded souls composed.
- Not far, as yet, from where I fell dismayed, 67
journeying, I saw amid the hanging grey,
a glow that lit a hemisphere of shade.
- Distant it was, but not so far away 70
but that I could discern, at least in part,
what reverend ones beside it made their stay.
- "Oh, you who are so learned in every art 73
and science," cried I, "let their names be known
who seem, in honour, from the rest apart."

INFERNO

- Then he, " These spirits all have some renown 76
 on earth where their great names are glorified.
 to them, heaven's grace, on that account, is shown."
- Sudden I heard a voice that near us cried, 79
 " Honour the glorious Poet ! Happy chance !
 his shade returns again here to abide."
- And when this voice had ceased, I saw advance 82
 four stately shadows, nor did there appear
 sadness or joy upon each countenance.
- My Master then began, " Behold him there, 85
 who walks in front, a weapon carrying,
 he leads them as though he their master were.
- That is the soul of Homer, who is King 88
 of Poets. Then Horace, of satiric fame,
 comes next : with Ovid and Lucan following.
- And since each one rejoices in the name 91
 of poet with which that welcoming voice was full,
 they honour me. Their choice I do not blame."
- So saw I gather there the illustrious school 94
 of those old masters of poetic style
 that, eagle-like, still holds its lofty rule.
- When they together had communed awhile, 97
 they turned to me with grace and courtesies,—
 my Guide assenting with a genial smile,—
- And so much honour did they pay to me 100
 as to confer on me the glorious right
 to hold the sixth place in their company.
- We went together talking, towards the light, 103
 speaking of matters that need not intrude
 now, though to that encounter apposite.
- We came to where a noble Castle stood 106
 with seven-fold walls of ample height enclosed,
 defended by a rivulet whose flood
- We crossed as though it were of earth composed. 109
 through seven gates these sages good and wise
 led us to a green meadow there disclosed.
- Here was a company with grave, calm eyes 112
 that told of their innate authority.
 they rarely spoke, and but in soft replies.

INFERNŌ

We then withdrew into a corner high, 115
 open and filled with light. Our eyes we raised,
 and each of them we plainly could descry.
 There, walking on the verdure as I gazed, 118
 were mighty spirits, whom to approach so near,
 my very soul uplifted and amazed.
 I saw Electra, Hector following her, 121
 Æneas, too, Caesar with eyes aglow
 like falcon's, armed with breastplate and with spear,
 Penthesilea, and Camilla, too. 124
 sitting beside Lavinia, without doubt,
 the face of King Latinus there I knew.
 Brutus was there, who turned the Tarquin out, 127
 Julia and Martia, with Lucretia,
 Cornelia, too,—Saladin sat without.
 Then, as I looked beyond, his soul I saw 130
 Master of all who know, whose wisdom made
 a philosophic company round him draw.
 They gazed on him, and to him honour paid : 133
 and here I saw Plato and Socrates
 who of all others closest to him stayed.
 Democritus who chance in all things sees, 136
 Diogenes, Anaxagoras I saw,
 Zeno, and Thales, and Empedocles,
 And Heraclitus,—founder of herbal law, 139
 wise Dioscorides,—Orpheus, near by,
 Livius and Tully, and moral Seneca,
 Euclid, geometer, and Ptolemy, 142
 Galen, Hippocrates, Avicenna's ghost,
 and Averroes with his Commentary.
 I cannot speak in full of all that host, 145
 for when, to tell them, one by one, I try,
 in the vast theme by failing voice is lost.
 We two, then, parted from that company, 148
 my Guide conducting me another way
 from quiet, to a place whose trembling sky
 Knew nothing of the cheerful light of day. 151

I N F E R N O C A N T O V

From the First Circle I descended slow,
into the Second which contains less space,
and where was crowded more of stinging woe.
There Minos stands, leering with horrible face,
judging the shades who know their sentence true
from how his tail his body does enlace.
For, as the unhappy souls come trooping through,
they make complete confession of their crimes,
and he assigns the retribution due,
Circling his body thus. As many times
as he does so their fortunes, far or near,
are portioned amid Hell's degrees and climes.
Always before him are they standing here
to learn their fate. They speak and hear their doom :
then to their punishment are hurried sheer.
“ Oh you who come into this realm of gloom,”
Minos addressed me as he saw my face,
pausing in this, his work, “ beware on whom
You trust, and how you enter on this place.
be not deceived because so wide the door.”
then cried my Guide, “ Why thus his soul menace ?
Stay not his coming hither : for, before,
it has been destined by that Sovereign Will
whose Power is Almighty :—ask no more.”
Then melancholy wails began to thrill
the air about my ears as on I went,
surrounded by these lamentations shrill.
I reached a place where every light was spent,
that roared and tumbled like a mighty sea
by loud contending tempests torn and rent.
The eternal hurricane, continually,
blew, battering about the unhappy souls
scattered in their tempestuous misery.
When near the ruined rocks, with shrieks and howls,
they cried aloud, lamented, and blasphemed
the heavenly power that the world controls.

INFERNO

To suffer this dire punishment it seemed, 37
 those were condemned who fleshly crimes had wrought
 and reason less than appetite esteemed.

Like starlings in the winds of winter caught, 40
 and blown in banded droves about the air,
 so were these spirits by the gale distraught.

Thrown up, anon, down driven, now here, now there,
 no hope had they,—not even of lesser pains,— 44
 no rest for them in all their wild despair.

As I have seen a company of cranes 46
 chanting their mournful song in long-drawn flight,
 these souls, in multitudes, and scattered trains,

Wheeled through the murky gloom without respite. 49
 then cried I, “Master, tell me, who are these
 so blasted with the darkling wind’s despight?”

“The first of them whose story,—should you please 52
 to listen,—I shall tell,” my Guide replied,
 “was Empress over many languages.

To lust this woman was so closely tied 55
 that she made lechery lawful in her land
 to hide the crime with which herself was dyed,

Semiramis. We from histories understand 58
 she followed Ninus, and his wife had been,
 swaying that realm the Soldan doth command.

Behind her one, self-slain for love is seen 61
 who broke her faith to dead Sichæus: then
 comes Cleopatra, the luxurious Queen.

See Helen, who so many a troublous year 64
 entailed,—the great Achilles, too, subdued
 at last, by love, see at her side appear.

Paris, behold, and Tristan.” He reviewed 67
 a thousand shades, and named them, pointing out
 each one of that love-slaughtered multitude.

Hearing the tales my Master told about 70
 these ladies, and these Cavaliers of old,
 my heart was pitiful, my mind in doubt.

“Poet,” I said, “I fain would be so bold 73
 as to address these two who, light as air,
 together clasped, towards us their journey hold.”

INFERNO

- Then he, "When they two nearer to us fare, 76
 then you may pray them, by the love they knew,
 to speak, and they will answer to your prayer."
- When, swept upon the wind, they nearer flew, 79
 I cried, "Oh weary souls, a moment stay,
 if none deny, that we may speak with you."
- As doves, by love that will not brook delay, 82
 with strong and lifted wings to their dear nest
 fly, borne by longing thoughts from far away,
- These spirits, leaving Dido and the rest, 85
 betook their flight through that malignant wind
 to us,—so strong my passionate request.
- She said, "Oh, being, pitiful and kind, 88
 who comes through murky gloom to visit those
 who stained with blood the earth they left behind,
- If He to whom the world obedience owes 91
 were but our friend, our prayers would rise for you
 whose heart for guilty ones such pity shows.
- O speak, or hear, as pleases you, we too 94
 will speak if you will hearken, and this air
 allow, which even now more gently blows.
- My native land was by the ocean, where 97
 the Po, descending, winds, eager to find
 the sea, and rest his weary waters there.
- Love, that in gentle heart is quick divined, 100
 drew him to this my beauty, that has met
 a fate whose horror lingers still behind.
- Love, that from loving, free no heart will set, 103
 so seized me, that I joy, beyond death's gates,
 to follow him, and love him, even yet.
- Love brought us to one death. Caïna waits 106
 the soul of him by whom that death was wrought."
 such words we heard from these unfortunates,
- And as they told their sorrows, I so caught 109
 their passion, that my head hung heavily,
 till, seeing this, my Master said, "What thought
- Entrances you?" I answered, "Woe is me, 112
 what tender longings dawning with the years
 have brought these souls to this calamity!"

INFERNO

I turned to them and said, " The heart that hears, 115
 Francesca, these your mournful histories,
 is pitiful, and melted into tears.
 But tell me, in the hour of sweetest sighs, 118
 how did Love whisper to you and make plain
 the meaning that in his first impulse lies ? "
 Then she to me, " There is no deeper pain 121
 than joy remembered in the midst of woe,
 this doctrine can your teacher well explain :
 But if our passionate tale you fain would know, 124
 I will the dawning of our love unfold
 as one who speaks and weeps. Not long ago,
 We read together, in a book that told 127
 how Lancelot prisoner of love was made.
 we were alone, together, uncontrolled,
 Ofttimes our glances from the writing strayed ; 130
 love led us for each other's eyes to look,
 blushing,—till one fond page our hearts betrayed.
 We read of the beloved smile that took 133
 the kiss of such a lover. This dear one
 who never now shall leave me, as he shook
 With passion, kissed me,—by that book undone, 136
 that was our Galeotto,—ay, and he
 that wrote the tale.—We read no further on."
 While thus she told her story mournfully, 139
 the other wept in such an anguished tone,
 I felt with grief like one about to die,
 And fell, as falls a corpse when life has gone. 142

INFERNO CANTO VI

My senses, which, in very pitifulness,
for that unhappy pair, had fled from me,
returning, were yet mixed with sad distress :
And everywhere about me, I could see
new torments, and new souls in bitter pain,
whether I moved, or gazed attentively.
In this Third Circle was an awful rain,
heavy, eternal, and accurst, and cold,
a changeless deluge, mixed with many a stain
Of filth, and snow, and hailstones downward rolled
from clouds that crowded through the murky air.
a sickening stench arose from the black mould.
And Cerberus, the fierce and monstrous, there
stood dog-like, with three separate necks, and bayed
above these souls in drenched and chill despair.
Red were his eyes, black grease his beard o'erlaid,
his paunch was huge, his feet with claws were set,
with which these souls he tore and scratched, and flayed.
Then howled like dogs, beneath the driving wet,
these impious wretches, circling in the flood,
and changing sides, some sheltering ease to get.
When Cerberus, that mighty Worm, upstood
showing his dreadful fangs in horrid gape,
his every limb twitched as in furious mood.
My Guide, then, from the soil, began to scrape
a handful, and this mass he quickly threw
into these throats stretched out in hungering shape.
As a fierce dog will greedily stop to chew
a crust thrown to him in his furious ire,
as though it were for that he ravening flew,
So champed the hideous jowl of Cerberus dire
who over all these spirits yelled and bayed,
so that for deafness was their one desire.
We passed by souls thrown down and overlayed
by that vile tempest, and we placed our feet
on many a form that was but empty shade.

INF ER NO

They lay upon the earth where the rain beat, 37
 save only one who hastened as he rose,
 quickly before us our advance to meet.
 " You who are led into this Hell of woes," 40
 he said, " some sign of recognition show :—
 your life began before mine had to close."
 To him I said, " Your sorrows here below 43
 have so erased you from my memory,
 neither your face nor person do I know.
 But tell me who and what you are who lie 46
 in such dire torment ? Greater may have been,
 but none so sickening in its misery."
 He answered me, " Your own town where, I ween, 49
 the sack of envy almost overflows,
 contained me in that life that was serene.
 Your citizens, for my horrid gluttony chose 52
 for me the name of Ciacco, and, now, see
 how wasted in this rain my figure grows.
 This punishment comes not alone on me : 55
 for all these round me suffer,—every one—
 like doom for like offence." No more said he.
 I said, " O Ciacco, you have undergone 58
 a fate that moves my pitying eyes to tears :
 tell, if you can, what lot shall fall upon
 My fellow townsmen : whether there appears 61
 one just man there, and why so many a jar
 'gainst this divided city discord rears."
 Then he to me, " After a lingering war, 64
 even unto blood, the Wild Sect, conquering,
 with many a scoff will chase the others far.
 And it behoves that three short years will bring 67
 this to fulfilment. And these first shall rise
 through him who keeps coastwise manoeuvring.
 For long shall these hold o'er their enemies 70
 their lifted front, and burden them with weight
 of shame amid their bitter groans and cries.
 Two men are just. Neglect has been their fate. 73
 Avarice, Pride, and Envy are the fires
 that set alight men's hearts within that state."

INFERNO

He ended weeping. "Still my mind requires 76
 some further knowledge," said I, "do but tell
 more of the tale my heart so much desires,
 Of Farinata, Tegghiaio as well, 79
 Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo,
 and Mosca,—tell me where these good men dwell.
 O, let me meet them, for I long to know 82
 whether to bliss of heaven their spirits rose
 or fell consigned to poisoned gloom below."
 Then he, "These souls far deeper dens enclose 85
 for darker crimes. To meet them, then, must you
 reach the last depth of this abyss of woes.
 But when the sweet world once again you view 88
 I pray that you will sometimes speak of me :—
 no more I'll say to you nor answer to."
 He looked on me a moment squinting, 91
 then sank he down, with head in hanging guise,
 to join the others in blind misery.
 Then said my Guide, "No more shall he arise 94
 till at the Angel's trump, the Judge shall come,
 the Enemy of their iniquities.
 Each one shall then revisit his sad tomb 97
 in his old flesh while all the skies shall roll
 with thunderous sound of his eternal doom."
 So went we with slow step amid that foul 100
 commixture of sad shadows, and of rain,
 musing upon the future of the soul.
 Then said I, "Master, tell me if their pain 103
 after the final Judgment shall commence,
 will deepen, or be lessened or remain ?"
 He answered, "Ask your own intelligence 106
 which tells you that the higher we can go
 the more acute our joy or suffering. Hence,
 Although these cursed spirits cannot grow 109
 unto perfection, after that event,
 nearer it they may be than now they know."
 We circled round that place, and as we went, 112
 spoke much,—of which I write not. By and by,
 we reached the margin of a steep descent,
 And there found Plutus, the great Enemy. 115

I N F E R N O C A N T O V I I

"Papè Satan, papè Satan, aleppè," 1
 cried Plutus with rough voice. Then he who knew
 all things, it seemed,—my Guide,—in his kind way,
 Said for my comfort, "Put your fear from you, 4
 he has no power to hinder our descent
 of this deep precipice." A glance he threw
 On that swollen-faced one. "Peace, and be content, 7
 you cursed Wolf," he said, "may you consume
 with rage within you. Justly are we sent
 To wander through this deep and caverned gloom : 10
 so it was willed in heaven where was wrought
 by Michael, the apostate angels' doom."
 As a ship's bellying sails, with wind full-fraught 13
 drop sudden, on the breaking of her mast,
 so fell the cruel wretch. And from this spot
 Descending by the dolorous brink, at last, 16
 we reached the Fourth Ring of that bourne wherein
 the crimes of all the Universe are amassed.
 Justice of God, how was the heaped-up sin 19
 of men displayed in torments and in woe !
 why do our faults such awful sufferings win ?
 As on Charybdis, rolling billows throw 22
 each upon each, their force with bellowing roar,
 these souls were dashed together to and fro,
 In numbers more than we had seen before. 25
 each, with his breast was set to roll along
 a heavy weight. Laboriously they bore
 From either side encountering : then they swung 28
 backward, out-shrieking, "Why do you hold fast ?"
 others, "Your goods away why have you flung ?"
 They turned, and back along the Circle passed 31
 onward still labouring on either hand,
 and on each other loud reproaches cast.
 Then each, as the half circle he had spanned, 34
 returned to seek another tournament.
 my heart was stung as I this conflict scanned.

INFERNO

I asked my Master, who before me went, 37
 "Who are these people? Why do they appear
 tonsured like monks?" "Their outlook was so bent,
 Their sight so twisted," said he, "year by year, 40
 although rich worldly goods they all had got,
 they spent not as they ought their gathered gear.
 So their loud barking shows, as, ceasing not, 43
 they wander, meeting thus from side to side
 contrary in their sin as in their lot.
 These all are priests whose heads no coverings hide 46
 of hair, and Popes and Cardinals, in whom
 the vice of avarice does most abide."
 Then I, "My Guide, among these I assume, 49
 there may be some whom I can recognise,
 who justly suffer thus the miser's doom."
 He answered me, "It is a vain surmise: 52
 their sordid life all recognition blocks.
 they know no one, and torment blinds their eyes.
 For ever will they rush to these rude shocks. 55
 these shall at last arise with fists tight closed,
 and those with scant and dissipated locks.
 Ill-keeping and ill-spending, sins opposed, 58
 have robbed them all of bliss, and brought them here:
 their fate in fine words need not be disclosed.
 And now, my son, to you it will be clear 61
 how vain are chance-held riches, for whose sake
 the world of men is held in strife and fear.
 All gold beneath the Moon were one to take, 64
 and all that has been,—none of those could save
 his wearied spirit or his life remake."
 "O Master," cried I, "one thing more I crave, 67
 what is this Chance of which I hear you speak,
 which with its claws all men doth so enslave?"
 He spoke again, "O wretched ones, and weak, 70
 what ignorance your intelligence retains!
 now hear my words, and my true meaning seek.
 He whose transcendent Mind supreme remains 73
 fashioned the heavens and placed in them sure guides.
 each o'er a part his guardian light maintains,

INFERNO

Diffusing equal splendour on all sides : 76
 so, to the glories of the world He gave
 rule and command whose ministry abides
 So that all vain goods which mankind may have, 79
 are changed from race to race, and blood to blood
 beyond the wit of man to stop or save.
 One rules, one languishes in feeble mood, 82
 as this Chance wills whose presence is concealed
 as lies a snake hid in a grassy wood.
 Nought to withstand her will your knowledge yield : 85
 she judges, and provides, and carries out
 her rule, as other gods their guidance wield.
 Her pauseless permutations are without 88
 truce, and necessity doth drive her on
 swiftly, so ceaseless change is brought about.
 Such is the power by whom reproach is won, 91
 and those whose thankfulness ought to appear,
 shout infamies on her in vicious tone.
 But lo, in bliss is she, and cannot hear. 94
 among the other spirits of the prime
 she moves benignant in her happy sphere.
 See, we descend to a more piteous clime 97
 than this, for, lo, the stars are falling now
 that lit our entrance. Come, we have no time
 To pause." Along the opposing ridge's brow, 100
 walking, we found a spring that overflowed
 from out a fissure, caverned far below.
 The stream was dark and muddy, and our road 103
 led us along these waters dim and grey
 till a new path our wandering footsteps trod.
 A water, named the Stygian Marsh, there lay 106
 formed by that sorrowful stream when it had drawn
 down from these gloomy cliffs its dreary way.
 I stood and gazed that dreadful scene upon, 109
 and saw within the marsh a miry band :
 naked they were, their eyes with anger shone.
 These fiercely fought, not only hand to hand, 112
 but with their heads, and breasts, and feet, and teeth,
 tearing each other on the filthy strand.

INFERNO

My Master said, " These whom you see beneath, 115
my son, are those whom anger has brought down.
and I would have you know that, too, there breathe
Some souls below the surface, as is shown 118
by yonder ghastly bubbling of the lake.
see, listen how the spirits gurgle and drown !
They cry, ' We cannot this foul slime forsake, 121
we who, through all the gladness of the sun,
bore hearts that smoked with smouldering anger, make
Our bed of torment in this slime.' Each one, 124
of clearly spoken words incapable,
mutters amid the mud in gurgling tone."
We walked around that filthy pool of Hell, 127
following its edge upon the drier strand,
watching these gulping wretches, miserable,
And came to where we saw a Tower stand. 130

INFERNO CANTO VIII

The story of our journey I pursue : 1
 when we had reached to that high Tower's base
 we saw two lights that from its summit threw
 Flashes, as from twin beacons, and their blaze 4
 was answered by another far away,
 so small as almost to elude our gaze.
 Then, turning to that Sea of knowledge, " Say," 7
 I cried, " what is this fire and that which glows
 so far off, and at whose command are they ? "
 Then he to me, " Look,—on the filthy ooze 10
 you can perceive what next awaits us here,
 if foul marsh-vapours do not round it close."
 Never did bowstring send an arrow clear, 13
 that cut the air more quickly in its flight,
 than a small boat we saw upon the mere
 Was rowed towards us. But one single wight 16
 guided its course as steersman, and he cried,
 " Have you, then, wandered hither, wicked sprite ? "
 " Phlegyas, Phlegyas," then spoke my Guide, 19
 " you cry in vain, for here you have us not
 longer than serves to pass this slimy tide."
 As one who feels that some deceptive plot 22
 has fallen on him, and chafes within his mind,
 so, in deep rage, did Phlegyas reach the spot.
 My Guide went down, I following behind. 25
 I placed myself beside him in the boat,
 which only then its due freight seemed to find.
 When seated thus my Guide and I could note 28
 how with an unaccustomed weight the prow
 more deeply laden than others seemed to float.
 As we through that dead marsh began to plough, 31
 one rose all plastered o'er with muddy stains,
 and cried, " Before his time, who cometh now ? "
 I said, " We come, but neither here remains. 34
 but who are you, and why are you so foul ? "
 " A soul," he cried, " who weeps amid his pains."

INFERNO

- Then I, "Weep on, and grieve, O cursed soul, 37
 for ever, for I know you well, although
 from out this covering of filth you howl."
- With both his hands he grasped our boat. "Go, go,"
 my Master cried, preventing him, "away 41
 from here and join those other dogs below."
- Caught in his soft embrace, I heard him say, 43
 kissing me, "Spirit, full of noble scorn,
 blessed be the mother in whose arms you lay."
- A proud, bad spirit he on earth was born. 46
 no trace of good around his memory lies,
 so roams his ghost now furious and forlorn.
- Ah, many are the glorious majesties 49
 above us now who soon in filth will lie,
 leaving a name for subjects to despise."
- "Master," I said, "this villain, verily, 52
 I fain would see engulfed in foulest ooze
 ere we have all the lake's expanse passed by."
- He said, "Before your eye the far side views, 55
 your wish shall have fulfilment. It is well
 you should not such grim satisfaction lose."
- At once the miry race upon him fell 58
 with such wild vehemence even now do I
 my thanks to heaven with satisfaction tell.
- "To Filippo Argenti," was their cry. 61
 then suddenly the passionate Florentine
 bit at himself in furious agony.
- We left him there. No more do I design 64
 to tell of him. A moaning reached my ears,
 and far in front of us I strained my eyne.
- "My son," my Master said, "lo, now appears 67
 a mighty City,—Dis it is by name,—
 whose thronging crowd a woeful burden bears."
- "Yes, clearly," cried I, as we nearer came, 70
 "there, in the valley, see, its mosques arise
 red, as though newly glowing from the flame."
- To me he said, "The fire that never dies 73
 within them glows as you can plainly see
 reflected in Hell's low and awful skies."

INFERNO

We came to a deep fosse that seemed to be 76
drawn round about that town disconsolate.
built as of iron seemed its walls to me.

Our boat passed round the lake in circle great 79
until at one part, "Get you to the shore,"
our pilot shouted loud, "Here is the gate."

Above that gate hundreds,—and hundreds more,— 82
I saw of spirits that from heaven were shed
of old, like rain. They cried, with angry roar,
"Who comes thus to the kingdom of the dead 85
without first dying?" Then my wise Guide, fain
for private converse there, some signals made.

They ceased a moment from their loud disdain 88
and said, "Come in alone. Send him away
who tries the secrets of this realm to gain.

Back be he sent to find his foolish way, 91
if he can find it. You may with us be,
who lead him through these realms of black dismay."

Ah, Reader, think how bitterly to me 94
sounded these fierce words, making me afraid
a safe return from hence I ne'er would see.

"O my beloved Guide," I cried, "whose aid 97
seven times to me has offered succour meet
and saved me when by peril I was stayed,
Leave me not here in ruin so complete. 100
if further troubles our advance oppose,
then let us backward swiftly turn our feet."

My Master, who had led me through such woes 103
so safely, said, "Fear not: we need not dread
that aught our heavenly ordered path can close.

Wait on me here, and be you comforted 106
within your heart on this security,
I will not leave you here, among the dead."

So saying, he departed, leaving me, 109
that loving parent: and within my head,
a war of "Yes" and "No" there seemed to be.

I could not hear the words my Master said. 112
he spoke not long when they with jostling race,
within the gateway of that City fled.

INFERNO

The port was closed before my Master's face 115
so that he could not enter, but from thence,
he turned to where I stood, with lingering pace.
His eyes were downcast in their diffidence, 118
no trace of his old masterdom awoke.
he said with sighs, "Why do they cast me hence
From these sad dwellings?" And to me he spoke, 121
"Heed not my wrath. Whate'er they have in store,
believe me, I will meet with counter-stroke.
Their pride is no new thing: they, once before, 124
at a less secret door than this made show
of like resistance,—open stands that door,—
O'er which the deadly words were writ. But, lo, 127
descending, guideless, the fell Circles through,
comes one who will these barriers o'erthrow
And leave the City open to our view." 130

INFERNO CANTO IX

The hue that fear had painted on my face
when I beheld my Master leaving me
served all new redness from his own to chase.
He stood as one who listens silently,
for no one's eyes might pierce that murky veil
and mournful gloom of clouded density.
“Needs must,” he then began, “that we prevail,
if not,—but there is help,—how long it is
until our succourer comes within our hail !”
I noted well that when he spoke like this,
his later words were in a different tone
from those he used at first. And yet, amiss
I may have read his meaning. Fear alone
hearing those broken accents of distress
fell on my heart, though his may have felt none.
“Down to the baleful cavern's last recess
do any come of those in that degree
whose only punishment is hopelessness ?”
This question did I ask, thus answered he,
“Rarely do any of us come, or tread
the path which has been followed now by me.
True, once before I have adventured
lured by the witch Erichtho, she who called
ghosts back into the bodies of the dead.
She forced me once within this place high-walled
ere, yet, for long, my flesh had lost its soul,
to bring a spirit by Judas' side installed.
That place is darker, plunged in deeper dole,
remotest from these skies which all enclose.
well do I know the way. Your fears control.
That noisome marsh its stench and vapour throws
around that dolorous place within whose door
we go not while these angry shades oppose.”
I have forgotten what he spoke of more,
for that high Tower again had caught my eye
which blazing flames upon its summit bore.

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He stood as one who listens silently, 4

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"Needs must," he then began, "that we prevail, 7

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I noted well that when he spoke like this, 10

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from those he used at first. And yet, amiss

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for that high Tower again had caught my eye

for that high tower again had caught my eye
which blazing flames upon its summit bore.

INFERNO

From it three hellish Furies rose on high 37
 whose bodies seemed to be with blood o'erstained.
 although their shape and port were womanly,
 Each waist, the coils of a green hydra strained, 40
 horned snakes and little serpents formed their hair,
 that in its bonds their fiery brows contained.
 My Guide, who knew the service they did there, 43
 waiting upon the Queen of Hell, said, "See,
 there come the fierce Erinyes from their lair ;
 Megaera on the left hand side, and she 46
 to right, Alecto, weeping in her rage,
 and, in the middle place, Tisiphone."
 He ceased. With her own breast each seemed to wage
 war with her hands and claws, shrieking, in tone 50
 so terrible, I clung close to the Sage.
 "Arise, Medusa, turn him into stone !" 52
 they cried, their awful eyes on us below,
 "for Theseus' wrong, we have small vengeance done."
 "Get you behind, and keep you covered, so, 55
 for, if the Gorgon come, and her you see,
 all hope of your return you must forego."
 So said my Guide, turning and grasping me, 58
 so that whate'er my hands could not conceal,
 with his own arms he covered tenderly.
 Oh, you whose minds can know, whose hearts can feel,
 muse on the doctrines that beneath the veil 62
 of this strange verse is written for your weal.
 And now, across that lake, turbid and pale, 46
 an awful sound came thundering, whose crash
 made both the margins of the water quail :
 As, suddenly, a storm, with hurtling dash 67
 of warring forces, will the forest tear,
 relentless, while the frantic branches thrash
 Together, leaves and twigs drift through the air 70
 and blossoms through the proudly driving dust,
 till beast and woodman shelter seek elsewhere.
 My eyes he then uncovered, saying, "Thrust 73
 your piercing glance to where, through all this mire,
 smoke thickest broods upon the slimy crust."

INFERNO

As frogs before a hungry snake retire and flee in fear about the waters wide, squatting upon the mud in terror dire,	76
I saw a thousand spirits driven aside before the steps of one who slowly passed dry-shod across the gloomy Stygian tide.	79
He waved away the fumes the marsh up-cast often with his left hand, and seemed to be even by the trouble of that toil harassed.	82
Then well I knew within my mind that he was sent from heaven. I turned me to my Guide, who bade me pause and pay him courtesy.	85
With high disdain his face was dignified, as, coming to the gate, with a small wand, he struck, and it, unhindered, opened wide.	88
"O race accursed, driven out by heaven's command," 91 he said, his foot upon that threshold base, "why this resistance of your insolent band ?	
Why do you dare rebellion thus to raise against that Will whose end ne'er fails success, and oft upon you heavier burdens lays ?	94
Why 'gainst the Fates all this rebelliousness ? even Cerberus' throat and chin, recall to mind, peeled of their hair, his punishment express."	97
He turned him round to the foul road behind, nor spoke to us, but went as one intent on other things,—to those about him, blind.	100
Then moving slowly on, our steps we bent into that gloomy place, remembering the words in whose security we went.	103
We entered there without more quarrelling, I keen to know what that strong fortalice might hold within its battlemented ring.	106
So, as we entered in, I threw my eyes around. On every side were gathered the crowded souls in piteous miseries.	109
And, as at Arles, where the Rhone is spread wide, or at Pola, near Quarnaro's bay, where Italy's bounds into the sea are led,	112

INFERNO

There is a mass of human graves. Here lay 115
tomb upon tomb, crowded in every part.
but these more pitiful and sad than they.
For, from their openings, flames were seen to start 118
by which they were enkindled all within,—
the smith demands no fiercer for his art.
O'er each its cover hung : a piteous din 121
arose from out them like a constant wail
of agony that could no comfort win.
I cried, " Oh, Master, tell me all the tale 124
of these who lie, each in his awful tomb,
crying in torment from its fiery pale."
Then he, " This pain is the heresiarchs' doom : 127
each followed by his sect, a company
numerous beyond belief do these enhume
Like with his like, in agony they lie. 130
the heat is varied in these fiery holes."
then, as we went to right, we wandered by
Between the ramparts and these tortured souls. 133

I N F E R N O C A N T O X

Then went we through a little secret wynd 1
 between the town's wall and these souls in pain :
 my Master first, I following behind.
 "O you who in your sovereign virtue deign 4
 to lead through these bad regions, if it meet
 your wish, speak, and to me these things make plain.
 These buried spirits can we see and greet ? 7
 the covers are upraised, no one is nigh
 to keep a guard." He answered me, "Complete
 Will be their burial in eternity, 10
 when, from the valley of Jehosaphat
 they bring their bodies that above now lie.
 Under that tomb which you are gazing at 13
 lies Epicurus who believed the soul
 can die, and those who at his feet once sat.
 Your wish that I these secrets should unroll 16
 of this sad history, I will satisfy,
 and those too, which in silence you control."
 I answered, "O my Guide, I do not try 19
 to hide my heart from you, nor do I so,
 but from yourself have learnt this brevity."
 "O Tuscan, you who pass this fiery glow 22
 alive, whose words so decorous appear,
 a little further linger here below.
 Your speech is such that when its tones I hear 25
 I know you native of that noble land
 towards which perchance I once was too severe."
 Suddenly came these words, and close at hand 28
 from one of these deep pits. I was afraid,
 and nearer to my Master made to stand.
 "Turn round. What is't you do ? Behold," he said,
 "'tis Farinata who has called to you, 32
 standing erect, above his waist displayed."
 When him I had thus plainly in my view, 34
 he seemed to try his breast and brow to raise,
 as though from Hell itself in scorn he drew.

INFERNO

My Master then among the narrow ways 37
 between the graves, urged me on hurriedly,
 saying, "Speak only in the shortest phrase."
 Quickly I stood beside that grave, and he 40
 within it, gazed on me with some disdain.
 "What ancestors were yours?" he said to me:
 And I, who to obey in this was fain, 43
 nought hiding told him all that he would know.
 he raised his brows somewhat, and spoke again.
 "Each one of these was bitterly my foe, 46
 and that of my forefathers, and my sect.
 twice did I force that party forth to go."
 "If driven forth," I answered, "recollect, 49
 they came again both times, an art which you
 and yours have not been able to perfect."
 Then at his side came slowly into view 52
 a countenance, above the chin displayed
 as though the spirit knelt. Around it threw
 Its glance as though an anxious search it made 55
 if any were with me. Unsatisfied
 in its great longing the unhappy shade,
 "O you who wander hither," moaning, cried, 58
 "led by high genius through this cell of pain,
 why does my son not follow at your side?"
 I said, "Not of myself this journey is ta'en, 61
 but through that Guide who does my coming wait,
 for whom, perchance, your Guido felt disdain."
 His words and the sad fashion of his fate 64
 already had revealed his name to me
 and led me, in reply, so much to state.
 At once upstarting, cried he, mournfully, 67
 "Felt, said you?—Is he then alive no more?
 no longer do his eyes the sweet light see?"
 Then as I paused a little time before 70
 I could an answer frame, I saw him fall
 and disappear, whileas that other bore
 Himself still upright changing not at all 73
 his aspect as he first encountered me:
 his neck bent not nor did his shoulders tall.

I N F E R N O

- His former speech resuming, "If it be," 76
 he said, "that they less of this art can show,
 it grieves me more than all this agony.
- Yet, from this hour, not fifty Moons shall glow 79
 ruling the skies of Hell, before you, too,
 the weight and burden of that art shall know.
- As you the sweet world would regain, the cause 82
 tell me of all this cruel enmity
 against me and my people in their laws."
- Then I replied, "The horrid tragedy 85
 that made the Arbia run red with blood
 has caused within our halls such oratory."
- He shook his head, and sighing, said, "I stood 88
 not by myself, nor would with these have gone
 in company without some reason good.
- Alone was I, dissenting, when each one 91
 cried out for Florence to be quick destroyed,—
 I hindered, openly, this being done."
- I said, "May peace be by your race enjoyed 94
 as you shall solve the troublous questionings
 that have so long my intellect employed.
- It seems that you can prophesy of things,— 97
 so I have heard,—that will be brought to light,
 though ignorant of what the present brings."
- "We see," he said, "as those who have far sight, 100
 things at a distance clear. The Almighty leaves
 among us thus much of His splendour bright.
- When they come near, or are, our sense receives 103
 no sign, save news brought here to serve our need,
 of man's condition it no knowledge gives.
- So you may understand that dead indeed 106
 shall be our knowledge when the gates shall close
 that to the vision of the future lead."
- Some consciousness of my neglect arose, 109
 and I said quickly, "Tell him who there lies
 that his dear son the joy of life still knows.
- Tell him my silence nothing else implies 112
 but that I knew not when he spoke to me
 those secrets I have learned from your replies."

INFERNO

- My Master calling me, I hastily 115
prayed that poor ghost to tell me who were those
who lay around him in his misery.
- He said, " More than a thousand share my woes. 118
there is the second Frederick, and, near by,
the Cardinal,—no more will I disclose."
- He vanished, and I backward turned my eye 121
and steps to where the ancient Poet stayed,
these prophecies weighing on me heavily.
- He moved, and as our forward way he made, 124
he asked, " Why do you seem dispirited ? "
I told him all that had my mind dismayed.
- " Keep constant in your mind what has been said 127
that threatens you with evil." Thus my Guide
with finger raised. " Be this remembered,
- That, when you meet that Lady glorified, 130
she, in sweet rays of heaven, seeing all,
will tell what in your life-time will betide."
- Turning our feet to leftward from the wall, 133
and journeying through the middle space, we took
a path that to a valley seemed to fall,
- Which even thus high, sent up its fetid smoke. 136

I N F E R N O C A N T O X I

A long the summit of a ridge we went, 1
 and there, within a ring of broken rock,
 there lay a pit of sorer punishment.
 Sudden, encountering the abhorrent shock 4
 of stench which belched from out that foul abode,
 we cowered beside a vast sepulchral block.
 "I guard," the writing of its surface showed, 7
 "Pope Anastasius, whose intelligence
 was by Photinus led from the right road."
 "We must descend but slowly, that our sense, 10
 inured to the foul odours of the way,
 may suffer less even should they grow more dense."
 So spake my Master. "If we must delay," 13
 I said, "let us the time in converse spend."
 he answered, "I would have it as you say.
 My son, where these black precipices trend 16
 about us, three small Circles are set round,
 like those which we have traversed, they descend.
 In all of them accursed shades are found. 19
 that you need only gaze when thither brought,
 the order of their crimes I shall expound.
 Malice which heaven regards with anger hot, 22
 has injury for its end : and this it gains
 either by force or fraud on others wrought.
 Since Fraud peculiarly to man pertains, 25
 it most displeases God : and deepest thrown,
 in pain, are those whom this foul error stains.
 The first of these three Circles holds, alone, 28
 the violent, parted into sections three,
 distinguished by the kind of violence shown.
 To God, himself, his neighbour, it may be 31
 this force is offered,—both to them, and all
 pertaining to them, as you plain will see.
 With death and cruel wounds a man may fall 34
 upon his neighbour, heaping upon him
 fire, ruin, theft, and all that may appal.

INFERNO

So murderers, and devastators grim, 37
 and thieves, in company to torment sent,
 are ranged around that woeful Circle's rim.
 But man may to himself prove violent, 40
 and to his worldly goods. The second Round
 holds them that for this sin in vain repent :
 With them the man who, lost to your world, is found 43
 idly to waste his goods, and does but wail
 throughout that life where gladness should abound.
 And some may even the Deity assail 46
 rebelliously, deny Him, and blaspheme,
 and to appreciate Nature's bounty fail.
 So those of Cahors and of Sodom seem 49
 imprinted with the smaller Circle's seal
 with those whose hearts for God feel no esteem.
 Fraud bites all consciences that with it deal, 52
 and may be used 'gainst one who trusts our truth,
 or one who may in it no confidence feel.
 These seem, indeed, to sever without ruth 55
 the bond of love that Nature frames. They nest
 within the Second Circle, where, in sooth,
 Hypocrisy, and Witchcraft, and the rest, 58
 the band of flatterers, dealers in simony,
 cheats, procurers, and every similar pest
 Are gathered. Natural love, too, you may see 61
 despised in the other way,—that love whereto
 some special claim for faith may added be.
 Hence, to the lowest of these Circles go,— 64
 where, on Earth's centre, is the seat of Dis,—
 traitors, to spend eternity of woe."
 "My Master," then, I cried, "so lucid is 67
 your exposition, that it shows me clear
 the form and people of this dread Abyss.
 But all these slimy people of the mere, 70
 those whom the wind beats, and the lashing rain,
 and those who, meeting with each other, jeer,—
 Why to this flaming town are they not ta'en, 73
 if to our God, All Powerful, they are foes ?
 and, if they are not, why are they in pain ?"

INFERNO

Then he to me, "What visions discompose your mind beyond its wont? What fantasies have turned your reason from its firm repose?"	76
Do you not call to mind the qualities of Evil that your 'Ethics' well express? abhorred of heaven are three enormities, Malice, Incontinence, and Beastliness.	79
of these, Incontinence than the other two is less accurst, and grieves the Almighty less.	82
If you receive that doctrine, if you, too, recall who those unhappy spirits were who yonder undergo their penance due,	85
You will know why, separate from the felons here they have been placed, and why less hard and dread the blows of heaven's justice that they bear."	88
"O you, my Sun," I cried, "whose glory, shed on all my doubts so clears them, I would fain doubt once again to be so comforted.	91
Yet turn you," I continued, "and explain why Divine Goodness Usury so offends? I would to solving of that knot attain."	94
"Philosophy," he said, "to him who attends her teaching, testifies in many a part how Nature's own development depends	97
On Intellect Divine, and on its Art.	100
the 'Physics' will assist you on this road, and you will learn,—near where its maxims start,—	
That, in your Art, the highest minds have trod in Nature's footsteps: and through her, alone, the Poet may claim kindred with his God.	103
In Genesis, remember how 'tis shown that from these two alone has man been raised to life, and his development has grown.	106
Now, Usury has not this truth appraised, but, putting trust in other ends, has been by scorn of Nature and of Art, debased.	109
But let us onward pass, for I have seen the Fishes on the horizon, gliding low: the Wain is now north-westward: down between Those distant rocks our path leads. Let us go."	112
	115

INFERNO

But when He came who drew the chosen flock 37
 upward, from Dis,—if I surmise aright,—
 there ran through this foul place so fierce a shock,
 And trembling, and unutterable affright, 40
 as though the Universe by Love were smote,—
 for some believe, by its supernal might
 The world, at times, to chaos has been brought. 43
 at such a moment, this great mountain fell,
 and ruin raged in places far remote.
 But fix your eyes below, where, down yon dell, 46
 there boils a river of blood within whose deeps
 sinners by violence in torment dwell.
 O blind cupidity and wrath that keeps 49
 its spur still keen through the short life of man,
 and now his soul in endless agony steep! ”
 I looked beneath me where there circling ran 52
 a deep-dug moat, there, where my Master showed,
 that seemed the whole of the low ground to span.
 Between the bank and where this river flowed, 55
 a company of Centaurs armed with bows
 even as once, on earth, they hunting rode,
 Whenas they saw us coming downwards, those 58
 stayed their quick pace while three among them went
 apart, who weapons for their bowstrings chose.
 One cried to us, “ What means this strange descent ? 61
 what torment do you seek ? From where you stand,
 I charge you, speak : for see, my bow is bent.”
 “ To Chiron we shall answer your demand,” 64
 my Master said, “ when near him we shall be.
 your headlong spirits never brooked command.”
 Touching me, then, “ ’Tis Nessus,” murmured he, 67
 “ who for the lovely Dejanira died,
 and wreaked strange vengeance on his enemy.
 Great Chiron is the midmost as they ride, 70
 he droops his head, who once Achilles nursed.
 Pholus comes next whose passions ne’er subside.
 Thousands of these, around the fosse dispersed, 73
 shoot at each soul who further from the blood
 rises than he had been by guilt immersed.”

INFERNO

Close came we down among this monstrous brood, 76
 and Chiron, parting with an arrow's head
 the tangled beard that round his lips was clewed,
 When he his monstrous mouth discovered, 79
 roared to his mates, "Lo, he who comes behind
 moves what he touches, walking. To the dead,
 We know this faculty is not assigned." 82
 and then, my Master, standing at his breast,
 the part where beast and man were inter-twined,
 Replied, "He is indeed alive, my guest, 85
 conducted through these shades. Necessity,
 not pleasure has compelled him to the quest.
 She who this trust placed on me, from on high, 88
 came downward from the rapturous songs of heaven.
 he is no thief, no wicked sprite am I.
 By that great Power by which my feet have striven 91
 to thread this tangled wilderness of woe,
 let one of this your company be given
 As trusty Guide, who may the passage show, 94
 and on his crupper bear him through the ford :
 he is no spirit, nor on air can go."
 Chiron then bent to right, and spoke a word 97
 to Nessus. "Turn," he said, "and as their guide,
 protection from the other troops afford."
 Along the crimson-boiling river's side, 100
 escorted thus, we went : while, all around,
 these seething souls from the red torrent cried.
 Some there I saw, up to their eyebrows drowned. 103
 "These tyrants were, on earth," the Centaur said,
 "they dealt in blood, and here their fate have found.
 Here, where they moan in tones so agonised, 106
 see Alexander, Dionysius mark,
 who Sicily through years of sorrow led.
 That one with hair upon his brow so dark, 109
 is Azzolino, and that other, fair,
 is Obizzo da Este, in death stark,
 Laid by his step-son, in the upper air." 112
 I turned me to the Poet. "Take," he said,
 "his guidance, first ; I will behind you fare."

INFERNO

Later, the Centaur's gaze was centered 115
on spirits who had raised their necks above
the boiling whirlpools of that torrent red.
Pointing to one who seemed apart to move, 118
he said, "He, in God's bosom, pierced the heart
which yonder, by the Thames, is held in love."
Some rose, on whom the waves came but athwart 121
their breasts: their faces thus were clearly seen,
and of these souls I recognised some part.
The fosse then shallower grew than it had been: 124
and when its waves but boiled around our feet,
we found a passage through its course unclean.
"You see," the Centaur said, "the waves retreat 127
at this part from the fosse, but let me show,—
so that your understanding be complete,—
That on the other side its hollows grow 130
deeper and deeper, till it forms again
the pool that whelms the tyrants in their woe.
Justice divine holds Attila in pain, 133
whoscourged the world with wrath: and Pyrrhus, too,
and Sextus. Bitter tears for ever drain
Into this bloody current from these two, 136
Riniero Pazzo, and Corneto's lord,
who did the world's highways with blood imbrue."
This said, he turned, and crossed again the ford. 139

INFERNO CANTO XIII

Ere Nessus reached the other side, we drew 1
 near to a wood so tangled, that no way
 appeared whereby we might have passage through.
 No verdure green, but banks of gloomy grey, 4
 no pleasant boughs, but limbs all gnarled and twined,
 no fruits, but poisonous thorns about us lay.
 Nor denser brakes nor sharper tangles find 7
 wild beasts that scorn the fields Corneto sees
 northward, to where the Cecina's waters wind.
 Here, the foul Harpies nest amid the trees 10
 who shook the Trojans' hearts with notes of woe
 till they, in haste, forsook the Strophades.
 Wide wings, with human face and neck, below 13
 they showed bird's claws, and feathered breasts. They
 wailed
 from the strange trees that in that region grow.
 "Ere we advance," my Guide who never failed 16
 said to me, "Know, this is the second Ring
 and will be so until our eyes have hailed
 What dreadful sights the horrible sands may bring. 19
 look well around. You may no longer doubt
 my words that tell of a like marvellous thing."
 On every side was wailing long drawn out, 22
 yet none were visible that raised the cry.
 I stopped affrighted at the piteous shout.
 My Guide imagined, as it seemed, that I 25
 deemed that the voices came from some that lay
 concealed among those trunks as we passed by.
 "Pluck but a twig from these," I heard him say, 28
 "and you will find a thing more marvellous,—
 these thoughts of yours will fail you utterly."
 I stretched my hand somewhat in front of us 31
 and tore a twig from off a thorn-tree tall.
 the trunk of it shrieked out, "Why tear me thus?"
 Then dark blood down the stem began to fall, 34
 and it again cried, "Why so lacerate me?
 have you no pity in your heart at all?"

INFERNO

For we are men, each turned into a tree : 37
 had we been serpents, you might still refrain :
 have pity, then, on our humanity.”

As a green brand whose end the fire has ta'en, 40
 and from the other hisses a shrill air,
 issuing strident like a cry of pain,

So, from the broken twig shrieks of despair, 43
 mingled with blood came fast, and to the ground
 I dropped it quickly, and stood trembling there.

“ Had he believed the story that he found 46
 in verses of my own,” my Guide then said,
 “ you, he would not, poor soul, have sought to wound.

But it was I, alas, whose counsel led 49
 thus the incredible to be shown as true :
 I do repent me of what has followed.

But tell him who you were, so that, of you 52
 he may yet speak and may your fame repair
 on earth above which he returns unto.”

“ Your words,” that trunk replied, “ so sweet and fair,
 allure me so that I can not refrain,— 56
 then with me, though my tale be tedious, bear.

Lo, I am he who handled both the keys 58
 of the great Frederick's heart : and these I plied,
 locking and opening with so soft an ease,

That no one else into his secrets pried. 61
 in this exalted task my toil and strain
 to me at length both sleep and life denied.

That Harlot Envy who in Caesar's train 64
 followed and cast around her venal eyes,
 fatal to all, of Courts the deadly bane,

Inflamed against me all my enemies, 67
 so that the fire even lit the Emperor's mind
 and turned his favours to hostilities.

Then I, alas, in scornful anger, blind, 70
 thinking through death itself to fly disgrace,
 to that fell crime my crimeless soul resigned.

By the new roots that bind me to this place, 73
 I swear, not once had failed my loyalty
 to him, so worthy of his noble race.

INFERNO

- And if the fate of either of you be 76
to see the world again, O let him save
my memory from the assaults of jealousy."
- A moment paused my Poet Guide, and gave 79
him space to finish. Then to me he said,
" Lose not the time, and further of him crave."
- Then I, " Ask him of what discoverèd, 82
may satisfy me, for I cannot speak,
my heart with pity is so burdenèd."
- Then he began again, " That which you seek 85
this one may do for you with generous mind.
O prisoned spirit, tell me more, and eke,
- Declare to us how, in these knots entwined, 88
your soul became, and whether any one
has broke the ties that so your members bind."
- The trunk then sighed profoundly, and its moan 91
became a voice, speaking in words like these.
" Brief shall my answer be. When life is done,
- And from its flesh the violent spirit flees, 94
torn from its habitation, it is sent
by Minos to the Seventh of these Degrees.
- It falls into this wood : in its descent, 97
no place is chosen, but where chance bids it fall,
it germinates, as seed with soil is blent.
- Then like a woodland sapling, it grows tall, 100
harpies devour its verdure, and that pain
serves to give opening to our piteous call.
- Like others, we shall come to claim again 103
that bodily form we cannot reassume,—
who takes his life, to find it hopes in vain.
- Here shall we drag them, to the forest's gloom 106
and our unhappy bodies shall be hung
each on the thorn that marks his spirit's doom."
- A while we waited, our attention strung 109
to listen if the trunk would tell us more,
when, to our ears, a sound was borne along
- As one may hear the flight of a wild boar,— 112
behind him, the loud clamour of the chase,
the wood, and all its beasts in fierce uproar.

INFERNO

Then, lo, to left of us there came, apace, 115
 two naked men, all torn and scratched, who fled
 breaking through all the thickets of the place.
 The first, "Come death,—come quickly!" clamoured.
 and he who followed him in haste thus spake: 119
 "Lano, your limbs not thus so quickly sped
 At Toppo's fight." A pause we saw him make, 121
 as though his breath had failed him, and he stood
 still, undistinguishable in the brake.
 Behind him, all the passes of the wood 124
 were filled with mastiffs black, like greyhounds, thrown
 loose from the leash, upon the track of blood.
 They seized him who had into hiding gone, 127
 tearing him with their cruel fangs, and bore
 outward, his mangled members, one by one.
 My Master took my hand and led me o'er 130
 near to that bush which shrieked aloud in vain
 over its broken branches steeped in gore.
 "Jacopo da Sant' Andrea, what gain 133
 to you," it cried, "to refuge here with me?
 not mine the offences which your memory stain."
 My Master when he paused enquiringly, 136
 said, "Who were you from whose limbs, everywhere,
 sighs mixed with blood burst forth so piteously?"
 Then he to us, "O souls who have come here 139
 to see this outrage on my person wrought,
 O gather these my ravaged leaves with care:
 Let them to my unhappy feet be brought. 142
 from that town came I, who her patron chose
 in John the Baptist. Mars, whom she forgot,
 Will by his art yet bring her countless woes. 145
 were it not that some signs of him remain
 to one who passes where the Arno flows,
 Those citizens who strove to build again 148
 on ashes left by Attila's savagery
 had failed, and all their toil had been in vain.
 Of my own roof I made my gallows tree." 151

INFERNO CANTO XIV

Love of my country, then, with gentle force, 1
drew me to glean the scattered leaves around,
and take them to him, now with cries grown hoarse.
Thence came we to the place where the third round 4
of this great Circle from the second led,
where works of Justice terrible were found.
Clearly to tell of this new scene of dread, 7
I say our footsteps brought us to a plain
from whose expanse all living plants are fled.
The dolorous forest fringes this domain 10
as it was circled by the fosse of blood.
close to its marge we did our steps restrain.
Thick, arid sand stretched out for many a rood, 13
not fashioned otherwise than that whereon
once on a time, the foot of Cato stood.
Vengeance of God !—Oh, how by every one 16
shouldst thou be feared, who now will read with awe
of what our gazing eyes had lit upon.
Many sad flocks of naked souls I saw 19
there crying out and moaning piteously.
each flock seemed subject to a diverse law.
Some on the ground supine were seen to lie : 22
others sat huddled close, and some there were
who wandered up and down continually.
More numerous were they who, here and there, 25
moved, than those fixed in torment : but these cried
more bitterly aloud in their despair.
Fell slowly over all that desert wide 28
flakes, broadly flaming, of a fiery rain,
as Alpine snow falls when the wind has died.
Such Alexander witnessed, when his train 31
marched conquering through India's blazing heat,
fall on his troops and on the burning plain,
On which he bade them trample with their feet, 34
the fury of the down-pour thus to tame,
when new-fallen flakes beneath their heels were beat.

INFERNO

So downward fell this never-ending flame, 37
 kindling the sand like tinder when the steel
 strikes,—doubled thus their agony became.
 Hither and thither did they part and wheel 40
 their miserable hands without repose,
 that they might less the fresh-fallen burnings feel.
 I said, "O Master, you who all our foes 43
 have conquered, save the wicked fiends, untamed,
 who had the power on us their gates to close,
 Who is that one who shelter has not claimed, 46
 but lies there, twisted in contemptuous hate
 as though this rain had not his flesh enflamed?"
 Then he, who heard me thus interrogate 49
 my Master as to him, cried out, "The same
 as I was once in life, so, now, my state.
 Though Jove should tire his smith from whom, aflame 53
 with rage the pointed bolt of lightning's fire
 he took, which, piercing me, that last day, came :
 Or though those others, one by one he tire 55
 in Mongibello, at the anvil black,
 crying, 'Good Vulcan, I your help require,'
 As once at Phlegra, me he did attack 58
 with all his force, yet does it seem to me
 such vengeance little joy would give him back."
 Then did my Master speak, more haughtily 61
 raising his tone than I had heard before,
 "O Capaneus, if your proud heart be
 Curbed not, your punishment will be the more 64
 increased in agony : the more you rage
 the greater are the pains for you in store."
 Turning to me he did his tone assuage. 67
 "He was," he said, "one of the Seven Kings
 who laid their siege to Thebes, who in that age
 Despised the Almighty, just as now he flings 70
 on Him defiance : as to him I said,
 these scoffs to his proud heart are fitting things.
 Now let us go. Be careful where you tread, 73
 lest on this burning sand your steps are set :
 let us go yonder where the woodlands spread."

INFERNO

Silently travelling onward, thus, we met the gushing of a rill from out the wood. I tremble still at that red rivulet.	76
As from the Bulicame runs the flood that sinful women share among them, so, the sand with this brook's current was imbrued.	79
Each bank was stone-built, as its bed below : so that I understood, along its side thus fashioned, lay the road that we must go.	82
"In all the ways in which I have been Guide, since first we crossed the threshold of that Gate passage where-through to no one is denied,	85
Nothing more strange your vision did await than in this rivulet which here flows down, and seems the flames above it to abate."	88
These were my Master's words, and by my own I asked him to afford my mind that meat for which its hunger had from him so grown.	91
"In the mid Sea a land there lies called Crete, now wasted," said he, "under whose first King men lived in peace and purity complete.	94
A mountain rose within it : many a spring sparkled amid its woods,—Ida its name, deserted now, like a decaying thing.	97
Here with her infant offspring, Rhea came, choosing it as his cradle, and thereon drowned his weak cries by raising loud acclaim.	100
An old man's image in that mount is shown, his shoulders towards Damietta, and his eyes on Rome, as though it as his mirror shone.	103
The statue's head, alone, fine gold supplies, of silver fashioned are his arms and breast, of brass his trunk, thence downward, to his thighs :	106
His lower limbs are iron of the best, save that his right foot is of furnaced clay, on which he seems more steadfastly to rest.	109
Except the gold these parts do all display fissures, from which distils a flow of tears that to the grotto, under, finds its way.	112

INFERNO

Its course which, downward through the valley bears,
 forms Acheron, and Styx, and Phlegethon, 116
 and finally, as this small rill appears.
 From hence when to the level it has gone, 118
 it forms Cocytus,—more about that lake
 I speak not. You will see it further on.”
 Then I to him, “ But if this streamlet take 121
 its origin from out our world, why then
 does it thus, here, its first appearance make ? ”
 He thus replied, “ It is within your ken, 124
 this place is circular, from bound to bound,
 descending leftward to its deepest den :
 Not yet have we completed the whole round. 127
 so that, if wondrous things do yet appear,
 let them not your intelligence astound.”
 I asked him then, “ My Master, let me hear 130
 more. Where is Lethe ? Where is Phlegethon ?
 of one you speak not. Is the other here,
 Born of this stream ? ” “ Your questions please me. One,”
 he said, “ might find its answer from the roar 134
 of boiling crimson that you look upon.
 Not here is Lethe. Yonder, its waters pour, 136
 where spirits crowd their pardoned souls to clean,
 contrite for lives that sinful were before.
 Long enough in this forest have we been. 139
 follow me, therefore, walking on the rim
 that flanks the stream, for, there, no flames are seen,
 And there, the smoke and fire are spent and dim.” 142

INFERNO CANTO XV

On one of these hard paths our feet were set, 1
 and, fuming upwards from the stream, dense airs
 saved from the fire both river and parapet.
 As 'twixt Wissant and Bruges, the Fleming dares 4
 to daunt the Sea, and a long mound up-throws
 that, from his land, the encroaching billow scares :
 Or as the Paduan, where the Brenta flows, 7
 his Castles and his hamlets guards, ere yet
 the Sun has melted Chiarentana's snows :
 Such were the mounds, although less broadly set, 10
 and less in height upraised,—by him whose hand
 confined,—whoe'er he was,—this rivulet.
 So far had we been travelling through this land, 13
 the wood was lost to sight if, even, had I,
 looking straight backward, the horizon scanned.
 We were encountered by a company 16
 of souls who, towards the rampart, peering drew
 as men into each others' faces pry
 At dusk of evening when the Moon is new, 19
 puckering their eyebrows at us, as some keen
 old tailor who his needle's eye looks through.
 When we thus gazed on by that crowd had been, 22
 one of them knew me. With his hand he caught
 my robe, and cried, "What wonder have I seen?"
 And I, when he his hand towards me brought, 25
 fixed a long look upon his burnt-up face,
 so that its wounds and scorching hindered not,
 But that my memory found of him some trace. 28
 then turning towards him with my face, I cried,
 "Are you, O Ser Brunetto, in this place?"
 Then he, "My son, let him not be denied, 31
 Brunetto, called Latini,—here, with you,
 awhile, from these his friends, to turn aside."
 I said to him, "As much as I can do, 34
 I gladly proffer,—if you wish, sit here :
 if he consent, my Guide these regions through."

INFERNO

- "My son," he said, "if any of us were 37
 to rest him, for a hundred years would rain
 this fire upon him, and no fan come near.
 But go you forward, I will close remain, 40
 and after, join again my company
 who roam bemoaning thus their endless pain."
 I dared not leave the line of ramparts high 43
 to go with him, but, with my head inclined,
 reverently listened to his history.
 He said, "What chance has wrought or fate destined 46
 your coming here before the last great Day?
 and who is he who, as your Guide, I find?"
 "In air serene," I said, "my pathway lay 49
 on earth, until within a valley dense,
 ere yet my years were full, I lost my way.
 It was but yestermorn I went from thence, 52
 and then returning him I met, who now
 homeward, along this pathway leads me hence."
 Then he to me, "If to your star you bow, 55
 following, you will not fail a glorious end,
 as I, in happier life, had cause to know.
 Had Fate seen fit my brief life to extend 58
 longer, your work, by heaven so favoured,
 I would have joyed to comfort and defend.
 For that ungrateful people, evilly bred, 61
 who came adown from Fiesole, long ago,
 and still of rock and cliff seem fashioned,
 To you for your good work will prove a foe. 64
 the reason is that among wild crab-trees
 it is not meet the gentle fig should grow.
 Old tales, throughout the world, declare that these 67
 were avaricious, envious, blind, and proud.
 cleanse yourself then from their iniquities.
 Fortune such honour to you has allowed 70
 that both these sects will hunger for your aid.
 let the goat miss his fodder. Let the crowd
 Of brutish Fiesolans have their hunger stayed 73
 upon themselves: and let them not disgrace
 this plant among their filthy straw displayed.

INFERNO

In it there lives again the sacred race of Romans who remained when this foul den of malice was established in the place."	76
"Were but my wishes fully granted," then, said I, "you would not now be banishèd out of our nature and the world of men :	79
For firmly in my memory cherishèd is the dear record of your fatherly care, in those days when my youthful mind you led	82
To think how men eternity may share. and while I live, that sense so vivid is my tongue for ever must its strength declare.	85
I write down all that you have spoken of this here, with another's, that my Lady, yet, may comment on, if I attain to bliss.	88
This much I fain would have you not forget, that, if my conscience no objection make, for any Fortune I am ready set.	91
My ears, as nothing new this earnest take, let Fortune, therefore, turn her wheel," I said, "as she may please, and the boor ply his rake."	94
My Master, listening gravely, turned his head to right, and looked at me : his words were few. "He listens best who such a note has made."	97
No less I did my conference renew with Ser Brunetto, and I bade him say whom the most notable of his band he knew.	100
Then he to me, "Of some, 'tis well, alway, to know : in silence, others may remain, for time would not allow of such delay.	103
Shortly, they all are clerks in this my train, and men of letters, in the world well known, disfigured, all, by the same filthy stain.	106
Priscian is in that crowd who weep and groan, and there Francesco of Accorso see, if you to hear of such foul scurf are prone,	109
Him you might see who by the Pope's decree from Arno to Bacchiglione sent, there left his nerves, strained in iniquity.	112

INFERNO

I could say more, but an impediment 115
comes to more speech and converse, for the fire
of burning sands with newer smoke is blent :
Others approach, and I must needs retire. 118
look kindly on my 'Treasure' : in its fate
I still survive,—no more do I require.”
So he departed, like a candidate 121
who, in a race, for the Green Mantle tries,
there, in the meadows, by Verona's gate,—
Not one who fails, but one who gains the prize. 124

INFERNO CANTO XVI

Now, falling to the next of these degrees, 1
the waters made a constant drone of sound
like the loud humming of a hive of bees.
Three shades came running quickly towards us bound 4
from out a company that passed us by,
beneath continual rain of torment drowned.
They came to us, and each one with a cry, 7
“O tarry, you whose garments seem to show
you from our country of depravity.”
Ah me, their limbs were scorched and wounded so 10
with burnings old and new, that all my mind
is saddened still, remembering their woe.
Then, at their cries, my Teacher looked behind 13
on me, and said, “A little, here, remain.
these it behoves to meet with aspect kind :
And, if it were not for this fiery rain, 16
whose arrowy shower enkindles so the ground,
'tis you, not they, should haste some speech to gain.”
Then, as we passed, they raised the unceasing sound 19
of their old sorrows, and as they drew close
all three in restless wheel moved round and round,
As naked champions, oiled before their foes, 22
wait on their chances, for advantage keen,
watching who first shall deal the heaviest blows,
So each one, in his circle, seemed to lean 25
his face towards me, and in this twisted pose,
there seemed dispute his neck and feet between.
“If the waste aspect of this place of woes 28
render our prayers despised,” began one shade,
“and our fire-blackened looks to scorn dispose,
Let our renown at least your souls persuade 31
to tell us who you are whose living feet
over Hell's surface a safe path have made.
In him whose tracks I follow thus so fleet, 34
though scarified with flame, and naked, you
a greater one than you believe shall meet

INFERNO

From good Gualdrada he his lineage drew, 37
 her grand-child, Guido Guerra named,—his fame
 alike from wisdom and from warfare grew.
 He who next beats the burning sand I name 40
 Tegghiaio Aldobrandi; men may, there,
 in the old world above, his deeds acclaim.
 In me, here sent their punishment to share, 43
 behold Jacopo Rusticucci,—nought
 but a fierce wife drove me to this despair.”
 If but that fiery shower I could have fought 46
 I would have thrown me down to welcome these,
 and he, my Guide, would have forbidden me not.
 Lest I should share their burning agonies 49
 fear held me from the longing in my soul
 to meet them kindly, and their hands to seize.
 Then I began, “It is not scorn, but dole 52
 that fills my wounded heart for your sad state:
 and only time to come will make it whole.
 I sorrowed when I heard my Guide relate 55
 your story,—words which made me muse on you,
 and this your coming to anticipate.
 I am a countryman of yours who knew 58
 long since, your honoured names, oft heard, and show
 respect which out of my affection grew.
 And now through all this bitterness I go 61
 towards the sweet fruit my Guide has promised me,—
 first visiting the central depths below.”
 “So long continued may your journey be, 64
 in soul and body,” he replied, “and so
 may your fame brighten through futurity,
 As you shall of our City let us know,— 67
 if Courtesy and Courage, as of old,
 dwell there, or if these virtues are brought low?
 Guglielmo Borsieri, late enrolled 70
 in this sad company, who there attends,
 a tale to wring our hearts has lately told.”
 “A new-sprung multitude, and venal ends, 73
 sudden attained, O Florence,—waste and pride
 have brought you till your piteous wail ascends.”

INFERNO

Thus with my countenance upward cast, I cried : 76
 and those three on each other gazed as though
 they on my words as on the truth relied.

“ O happy are you who can answer so, 79
 with little cost, when others question you,”
 they said, “ in words which freely seem to flow.

But, when these gloomy scenes you have passed through,
 once more to gaze upon the starlight sweet, 83
 and memories of your journey to renew,

Among mankind again our names repeat.” 85
 then turned they wheeling round, and fled away :
 like wings appeared the fluttering of their feet.

Scarce time would one have had ‘ Amen ’ to say 88
 before they vanished thus, and as they went,
 my Master onward journeyed on his way.

I followed him, and as I came more near, 91
 the falling water’s thunder filled the air
 so that each others’ speech we scarce could hear.

As that hill stream which from its mountain lair 94
 on Monte Veso, towards the East descends
 to leftward of the Apennines,—and there,

Is named the Acquacheta, while it trends 97
 lower and lower till the name is lost,
 as, passing down by Forli’s walls, it bends,—

Roars as from Alpine precipices tossed 100
 downwards to where San Benedetto’s house
 might afford shelter to a goodly host.

So found we, from a height precipitous 103
 these crimson eddies plunging down with din
 and thunder that would soon have deafened us.

About my waist I wore a cord within 106
 whose noose I, at one time, before, had thought
 to catch the panther with the painted skin.

When I had wholly loosed me from its knot, 109
 directed thus by my wise Guide, to him
 the rope together inter-twined, I brought.

Then he to the right, along the rocky rim 112
 clambering, from the margin of the height
 hurled it into the abyss profound and dim.

INFERN O

“Some marvellous thing will now be brought to light,”
I thought, “by this strange signal sent below, 116
which he now watches with such anxious sight.”
Ah, cautious must they ever be who go 118
in company with those who have the wit
not deeds alone, but inmost thoughts to know.
He said to me, “Now from this awful pit 121
will come one whom I wait for, and your dream
of marvellous things will have an answer fit.”
Always to truest things which falsehoods seem 124
a man should close his lips, for, though he be
blameless, yet men his acts may guilty deem :
But here I cannot choose but speak. O ye 127
who read this Comedy of mine, I swear
by all my hopes of its futurity,
That then I saw, in that thick, sombre air, 130
a figure swimming up, whose aspect dread
might well have struck the stoutest heart with fear.
As one who rises up from ocean’s bed, 133
where he has gone some anchor to undo
to rocks or sea-wrack firmly fastened,
His arms he spread, his legs he upward drew. 136

INFERNO CANTO XVII

"Behold the Monster with the stinging tail, 1
 hills, walls, and weapons breaking and ruining,
 from whom a poisonous odour doth exhale."
 So spoke my Guide to me while signalling 4
 that near the edge of that rock-fashioned way
 the Monster should his feet to station bring.
 This Image horrible of Fraud, to stay 7
 his head and breast upon the brink contrived,
 all else below the craggy margin lay.
 His face like that of one who justly lived 10
 had, outwardly, an aspect all benign :
 below he seemed from reptile race derived.
 His arms with hair were covered, and his spine, 13
 his breast, and both his sides were painted o'er
 with rings and knottings, and with glimmering shine
 Bright hues were intermingled on him more 16
 than Turk or Tartar in his carpet threads,
 or than the loom of fair Arachne bore.
 As stand the fishing luggers with their heads 19
 aground, and half afloat, or, as among
 the boorish Germans, by the river beds
 The beaver, arming for his fight, waits long, 22
 so, on the parapet that made our road,
 bounding the sands, this odious creature hung.
 Out of the void his tail, upcurling showed, 25
 twisting and brandishing its venom'd sting
 fashioned as is the scorpion's deadly goad.
 My Master said, "We must our footsteps bring 28
 a little nearer to the place whereon
 that Beast malignant now is lingering."
 So to the right we passed till we had won 31
 downwards ten paces to the Circle's rim
 whereon the burning sand less hotly shone.
 I saw, when we more close had come to him, 34
 near by, some people sitting on the sand
 close by to where the pit fell, hollow and dim.

INFERNO

"Go," said my Guide, "that you may understand 37
 wholly all things that in this Round exist,
 speak, and mark well the bearing of that band :
 But do not long in converse there persist. 40
 meantime I go this villainous Beast to pray
 that with his strength our journey he assist."
 Thus, upwards, all alone, I took my way 43
 to where, at the extreme edge of the Round
 this group of gloomy spirits made their stay.
 Their eyes were mournfully in weeping drowned, 46
 their hands a doleful gesture did repeat
 against the hot air and the burning ground.
 Not otherwise do dogs, in summer heat, 49
 bitten by fleas and gnats and stinging flies,
 seek respite with their muzzles and their feet.
 Then, as I scanned each visage with my eyes 52
 all were, by baleful fire disfigured,
 so that not one face did I recognise.
 But each, I saw, had, round his neck, a thread 55
 where hung a bag with figures painted o'er,
 differing for each, on which their glances fed.
 Looking at these, I saw one purse of 'or' 58
 on which an azure bearing was designed,
 that shape and posture of a lion bore.
 Then, following on, with eager look, behind, 61
 I saw another, redder than blood its hue,
 on which there was a cream-white goose outlined :
 And one, a pregnant sow, depicted blue, 64
 bore on a satchel all of purest white.
 he quick addressed me thus, "What is't you do
 In this dread den ? Away, and quit my sight. 67
 since still you live, know that at my left hand
 my neighbour, Vitaliano, will alight.
 I am a Paduan among this band 70
 of Florentines, who constantly cry out
 'When will the Sovereign knight among us stand
 Who his three goats shall proudly bear about ?'" 73
 this said, his mouth he twisted, and his tongue
 protruded, as a beast that licks its snout.

INFERNO

Then I, lest by such parley, over long, 76
 I should offend him who had warned me so,
 turned towards him from among that weary throng.
 I found my Guide, and, on the Beast's back, lo, 79
 as rider he had placed himself. He cried,
 "Come on at once: be bold and keen to go.
 By such a stair we must descend. Now, ride 82
 before me, I the middle place will take
 lest, from his tail, some evil you betide."
 As one with ague first begins to shake, 85
 whose finger-nails grow pale, and in his fear
 at this chill seizure, all his members quake:
 So was I these commanding words to hear. 88
 but shame drove me his orders to obey
 which makes a servant to his lord give ear.
 On these vast shoulders then I climbed to ride. 91
 I would have said,—but words did not avail,
 as I had hoped,—“Your arms about me lay.”
 But he whose succour never did me fail 94
 before, as soon as I my place had ta'en,
 circled me in his arms as in a pale,
 And said, “Go, Geryon, wide be the plane 97
 your circles take, and gradual the descent.
 for an unwonted load your limbs sustain.”
 Then as a ship upon her voyage intent, 100
 backs from the land and turns her, when the sea
 is free for her advancing, so, he bent
 His tail to where his head had been: then he 103
 stretched out, and moved it like an eel, the air
 gathering with wide-thrown claws, embracingly.
 No time of dread more terrible was there 106
 when Phaeton dropped the reins, and o'er the sky
 fire spread, as signs upon it still declare:
 Nor when, as wax began to liquefy, 109
 and on poor Icarus' loins wings would not stay,
 his father cried, “An evil road you try,”
 Than this, when I upon that perilous way 112
 lost sight of all things but that Monster vile,
 and knew that on the air alone we lay.

INFERNO

Thus did we circling slowly, slowly go 115
downwards, and even this could not be known
but for the wind that caught me from below.
Soon to the right I heard the dreadful moan 118
and roaring plunge of the great cataract's fall.
with straining eyes, my neck was outward thrown.
I shuddered, gazing at that awful wall, 121
and feared to land 'mid fires and wailing cries
that did me, crouching fearfully, appal.
And clearer as I saw these horrors rise, 124
I felt our wheeling fall, encountering
around us new affrights and miseries.
As falcon who, for long upon the wing, 127
seeing nor lure nor bird, whose master cries
"Ah then, you stoop"—his chase abandoning,
Wearily to the ground beneath him flies, 130
skimming with many a circling flight to sit
sullen, and distant from his master's eyes,
So Geryon brought us downward to that pit 133
beneath the deep-scarred rock, and, lightening
his back, we stood on foot, and saw him flit
Quickly away as arrow from the string. 136

INFERNO CANTO XVIII

A place in Hell is Malebolgè called, 1
 fashioned throughout of rocks of rusty stain
 as are the cliffs by which its sides are walled.
 And, in the middle of that hideous plain 4
 yawns a descending gulf both deep and wide,
 whose shape in its own place I shall explain.
 The Circle which, along the cavern's side, 7
 and under the great cliff its round extends,
 ten separate valleys equally divide,
 Like to the ring of moats which oft defends 10
 a stately castle's ramparts, so these lie,
 each guarding thus the place round which it bends.
 And as, by castle's walls the traveller sees 13
 bridges, that leading from the threshold, span
 from side to side, these deep declivities,
 So, from the rocky margin, bridges ran 16
 across the moats, and finished, each, its track
 abruptly, where the central chasm began.
 In this place shaken off from Geryon's back 19
 we stood, and then the Poet turned his face
 leftward. To follow him I was not slack.
 New signs of woe our eyes began to trace : 22
 new torments, and new scourgings horribly
 filled the first hollow of that awful place.
 Deep down were naked sinners, we could see 25
 one half who faced us, and the rest our way
 pursued, but at a quicker pace than we.
 As Romans, when they gather at the day 28
 of Jubilee, upon the bridge delayed,
 are bid to move in order, so that they
 Who go towards Saint Peter's are all made 31
 to face the Castle, the returning tide
 looking to Mount Giordano are arrayed.
 Over these blackened crags, on every side 34
 devils with horns I saw, who lashed each shade
 with monstrous scourges which they cruelly plied.

INFERNO

Ah me ! what miserable leaps they made 37
 at the first cruel stroke, nor would they stay
 until a second or a third was laid.

Then, as I went, I saw one in the way 40
 at sight of whom I cried, " That face I know,
 familiar to me from an earlier day."

My gentle Guide then paused, and let me go 43
 a little further back this shade to greet.
 the scourged and wounded spirit's head hung low,

He trying in this manner to retreat 46
 from recognition. It availed him not.
 I said, " O you whose eyes I cannot meet,

If one by these your features can be taught, 49
 are Venedico Caccianimico.
 what has you to such foul surroundings brought ? "

Then he to me, " To answer I am slow : 52
 but the clear sweetness of your luring speech
 brings to my mind the world I used to know.

I brought Ghisola fair within the reach 55
 of him, the Marquis, who her ruin wrought,
 whate'er of shame that horrid tale may teach.

Not I alone am from Bologna brought, 58
 but here, so many gather, it would seem
 fewer the tongues that yonder, now, are taught

To answer ' Sipa,'¹ 'twixt Savana's stream 61
 and Reno's : and, if witness you require,
 remember how of gold we ever dream."

While speaking to me one among that quire 64
 of Devils, struck him with his whip, and cried,
 " Go, pandar, women here are not for hire."

I then rejoined my escort, and we hied 67
 forward, until some paces on, we won
 to where a jutting prominence we espied.

Lightly we scaled its summit, whereupon 70
 we turned to right across its highest place,
 till from that endless barrier we had gone.

When we had reached to where an open space 73
 allowed these poor scourged souls to pass, my Guide
 called to me, " Stop," he said, " and to each face

¹ Sipa : "yes" or "truly."

I N F E R N O

- Of these unfortunates be your glance applied. 76
 till now, we could not well their features see
 for that they journeyed with us, side by side.”
- From that old bridge we watched the company 79
 that met us, and on whom the Demons laid
 as on the rest, their scourges cruelly.
- My Master, ere a word to him I said, 82
 called, “ Look on that great shade that comes this way,
 who for his bitter pain no tears has shed.
- How much of royal state his looks display ! 85
 Jason is he, who by his force and wile
 the Golden Fleece from Colchis bore away.
- Then, after, passed he by the Lemnian Isle 88
 where the wild women with inhuman hate
 put every man to death : and there by guile
- Of signs and golden words, the virgin state 91
 of young Hypsipyle did he invade.
 she who had tricked the others, desolate
- He left at home, no more an innocent maid. 94
 this is the crime that dooms him to this woe.
 here, too, is vengeance for Medea paid :
- With him are all who practice treachery so. 97
 enough of this first Valley, and of those
 who suffer from its horrors now you know.”
- Then went we onwards, as the straight path rose 100
 over another barrier which, again,
 another of these Dungeons did enclose.
- There heard we spirits groaning in their pain 103
 within that foul pit who with snortings raged,
 hard blows upon themselves we saw them rain.
- On all the rocks by which these souls were caged, 106
 was hideous mould and scum of horrid smell :
 the place with eyes and nose a conflict waged.
- The hollow centre down so deeply fell 109
 that, unless mounted on the highest place,
 what was within its depths no one could tell.
- There mounting, I beheld a wretched race 112
 plunged deep in filth and ordure, seemingly
 of human origin. These forms to trace

INFERNO

Thus, from above, I strained my searching eye, 115
and saw one with his head so plastered o'er,
if clerk or layman he, I could not spy.
He shrieked, "Why on me thus so fiercely glower? 118
look on these other filthy ones." I said,
"Meseems I once have looked on you before.
Ah, then, fair locks and dry adorned your head, 121
Alessio Interminei, you,
of Lucca, if my eyes are not misled."
Then beat he on his forehead, "It is true," 124
he cried, "my flatteries have brought me here
in which my tongue so revelled, as you knew."
Then said my Guide, "Now let your vision clear 127
forward still further go in this foul place
so that to you her aspect may appear,
That dissolute woman full of vile disgrace 130
who claws herself with filthy nails, and now
crouches, now rises up before your face,
Thais, the harlot, she who could allow 133
praise to her lover and when asked if she
were grateful, 'Marvellously,' did avow.
Thus satiated may your vision be." 136

INFERNO CANTO XIX

O Simon Magus and your followers vile, 1
 the things of God, which are to goodness wed,
 you, by your low rapacity, defile,
 By silver and by gold adulterated : 4
 the trumpet of your guilt I now must sound
 who in the third dark Valley make your bed.
 For now we, mounting on the rampart, found 7
 a prominence of rock that jutted, steep,
 over the wall that did the gulph surround.
 Wisdom Supreme, how high your art, and deep : 10
 in earth and heaven, and in this haunt malign,
 how just a balance does your virtue keep !
 Down in the depths whose sides the crags align, 13
 the livid rock was pierced and hollowed out
 in deep depressions, of the same design
 As are the open basins placed about 16
 my own fair San Giovanni's Baptistery
 as fons. Lest anyone arise to doubt
 My motive, long since, I shall not deny 19
 that one of these I broke, a babe to save
 from death,—let this my action justify.
 From out each round and downward pointing cave, 22
 a sinner's feet were thrust, near to the knee :
 all else was buried in that ghastly grave,
 And both feet were aflame. Such agony 25
 arose, that they were coiled in spasms that might
 from twisted band or withe have set them free.
 And as the flame that feeds on oil runs light 28
 along the surface, so it seemed to me,
 from heel to toe their wretched feet burned bright.
 I cried aloud, " Oh, Master, who is he 31
 in torment greater than his fellows thrown,
 round whom a redder burning seems to be ? "
 He said, " Let me but carry you adown 34
 yonder to where the bank more steep has slid :
 from his own mouth his story may be known."

INFERNO

And I, "Whatever be the course you bid, 37
 such is my wish : my Lord, I question not
 your guidance, for you know even what is hid."
 Then were we to the Fourth enclosure brought, 40
 and, turning to the left, went down to where
 the chasm with narrow openings was wrought.
 Nor did my Master cease my weight to bear 43
 till we had reached the hollow where that soul
 with piteous limbs lamented in despair.
 "Oh, who are you, head downward in this hole, 46
 unhappy spirit, planted like a stake ?"
 I cried, "to me in words your tale unroll."
 I stood like priest, to whom his shrift would make 49
 some vile assassin, who, ere done to death,
 calls him again a moment's grace to take.
 "Are you then there ?" he shouted from beneath, 52
 "there, Boniface, already ? Then to me
 the written prophecy has broken faith
 By many years. And has satiety 55
 so soon o'erta'en you who, for gold, had dared
 to seize your Dame and use her wrongfully ?"
 I stood as those to whom speech is declared 58
 they understand not, who with nought to say
 stand as if mocked, with answer unprepared.
 Then Virgil cried, "Tell him without delay, 61
 'I am not he whom you imagine here.'"
 thus urged, to him I answered in that way,
 At which the shade, as though in shame and fear, 64
 twisted his limbs, crying in plaintive tone,
 "What then is it from me you wish to hear ?
 If that to you my history should be known, 67
 be of such moment that you here have strayed,
 know, the Great Mantle once I did put on :
 A true 'Son of the Bear' was I, and made 70
 the fortune of my Bear's whelps,—verily,
 I laid up wealth that here myself has laid.
 Beneath my head are those in simony 73
 who all preceded me in that same crime,
 down in the fissures of the rock they lie.

INFERNO

- There, also, I shall fall when comes the time 76
 that he shall hither journey whom I thought,
 when asking, had already reached this clime.
- Longer the time since first my feet were caught 79
 in flame I have to suffer here than he,
 upturned like this with agony so fraught.
- For, after, deeper in iniquity, 82
 shall come a lawless Shepherd from the West,
 whose uglier deeds may cover him and me :
- Another Jason he, that High Priest vile 85
 we read of in the Maccabees : at Court
 favoured, so may he win the French King's smile."
- I know not if too foolish my retort 88
 as I replied to him in words like these :
 " Come now, what money did our Lord extort
- From Peter when He handed him the Keys 91
 into his own control ? Ah, did He not
 say only, ' Follow me ? ' Tell me what fees
- Peter or others from Matthias got 94
 in silver or gold, when they to him the place
 lost, with his soul, by Judas, did allot ?
- Stay here, your woes exceed not your disgrace. 97
 guard well that treasure of ill-gotten gold
 gained by opposing Charles with intrigue base.
- And did not reverence even here withhold 100
 my lips from speaking of those mighty Keys
 which you once in the happy world controlled,
- I fain would use even graver words than these. 103
 the earth is saddened by your avarice,
 humbling the good, making the bad increase.
- You shepherds the Evangelist describes 106
 when her he views who sits upon the seas
 with Kings commingling in adulterous vice,
- She who with seven heads was born, and these 109
 crowned with ten horns, from which her strength she
 drew
- as long as virtue seemed her spouse to please.
- Silver and gold are held as God by you. 112
 how do you differ from the idolator
 who, for your hundred, but one Idol knew ?

INFERNO

Ah, Constantine, of evil what a store 115
lay, not in your conversion, but within
that Dower the first rich Father from you bore ? ”
And while I thus admonished his base sin, 118
remorse or wrath so gnawed him that he twined
his feet in pain that could no respite win.
I deem my Guide found pleasing to his mind 121
these words of mine, so did he seem to gaze
and hearken to my words so clear defined.
Then did he with both arms my body raise 124
up to his breast, and thus we traced again
upward, the winding of the rocky ways.
Nor did he cease me closely thus to strain 127
till we were able at the arch's height
the line 'twixt Fourth and Fifth bank to attain.
Here softly did he let my limbs alight, 130
gently upon that rock so rough and rude
whose passage might a mountain-goat affright,
And there, a further Vale, beneath, we viewed. 133

INFERNO CANTO XX

Now must I sing of other pains than these 1
 and fill the twentieth Canto of my first
 Canzonè, with souls drowned in miseries.
 Eager, I bent me, till my sight traversed 4
 the darkness of that deep and caverned place
 whose hollowed shadows were in tears immersed.
 People I saw pass through that rounded space 7
 silent, or weeping bitterly, as, here,
 slowly, the Churchmen, in their Litanies pace.
 Then as my sight upon them fell more near 10
 I saw each was distorted marvellously.
 where, 'neath his chin, the throat and neck appear,
 Each had his face turned backward, nor could see 13
 before him, for so twisted was his view,
 he knew not what in front of him might be.
 So, by paralysis may one or two 16
 have been transformed. But never yet have I
 seen such, nor scarce can I believe it true.
 Reader, as your perusal may supply 19
 some heaven-sent profit, think a moment, how
 my eyes could see this horror, and be dry !
 Our noble frame made such a shameful show 22
 that even the very tears from sad eyes shed
 fell on the baser backward parts below.
 Truly I wept, my arms in horror spread 25
 upon the crags, so that my Escort cried,
 " Are you, too, 'mong the foolish and unread ?
 Pity lives on although she here has died. 28
 is he not impious whose compassion tries
 to question what God's justice does decide ?
 Lift, lift your head, and see before your eyes 31
 him whom the Theban soil engulfed, to whom
 they cried, ' Amphiaraüs, whither lies
 Your flight ? why from the battle do you come ? ' 34
 nor did he stay, till running swift, adown
 he reached to Minos' all-embracing gloom.

INFERN O

See how his breast is for his shoulders shown, 37
 for that he too far forward would have seen,
 and his too straining sight is backward thrown.
 Tiresias see, who once possessed the mien 40
 of manhood, till he changed his sex, and so,
 shapen anew in every limb had been.
 Ere he another change could undergo 43
 he had to strike those twining snakes again
 before his cheeks could signs of manhood show.
 With back to this one's paunch comes Aruns, fain 46
 was he to dwell on Luni's hills whereon
 toil peasants from Carrara far beneath.
 There, where around the snowy marble shone, 49
 a cavern he appointed for his cell
 whence he the stars and ocean gazed upon.
 And look on her whose breasts are covered well 52
 from sight by the long ringlets of her hair
 behind, as her deformities compel.
 'Tis Manto, who, from wandering everywhere, 55
 fixed on that place wherein I saw the light,
 of which I fain would speak,—if you will hear.
 After her father's death, and when the might 58
 of Bacchus' city into slavery fell,
 long time about the world she took her flight.
 In lovely Italy, in an Alpine dell 61
 of that Tyrol that locks the Germans in,
 of the sweet lake of Benaco they tell.
 A thousand streams which in that lake begin 64
 from Garda to Camonica flow down,
 watering the slopes of lofty Apennine.
 In one place there, three Bishops of renown 67
 of Trento, Brescia, and Verona might
 each give a pastoral blessing all his own.
 There sits Peschiera fair, well armed for fight 70
 fronting the Brescian and the Bergamese
 where the lake's shore slopes to a lower height,
 And there, the brimming waters find release, 73
 leaving the lake that needs must let them go
 to wind adown through green-clad pasturages.

INFERNO

- Soon as the water parts from Benaco 76
it takes the name of Mincio, instead,
till at Governo's walls it joins the Po.
- Not far upon its course its waters spread 79
brimming across a wide and hollow plain
where one, in summer heats, might fever dread.
- Passing, the cruel virgin's sight was ta'en 82
by land appearing in the dolorous waste
that seemed untilled, unpeopled to remain.
- Thither, from all men's concourse did she haste 85
with all her slaves, her magic arts to ply :
and left her soulless corpse there at the last.
- Then men from round about, both far and nigh 88
gathered about the place, for it was strong,
so close around it did the waters lie.
- Over her bones a town they raised erelong 91
and called it, from her name who chose the place,
Mantua,—nor were lots in choosing flung.
- In those old days the people grew apace 94
until the foolish Casalodi fell,
by Pinamonte hurried to disgrace.
- So teach I you, that, hearing others tell 97
false histories of how my land arose,
you may the truth I speak remember well."
- Then I, " My Master, this your story flows 100
with such a certain sound, my faith is won,
nor shall I heed spent ashes such as those.
- But tell me of those shades now moving on 103
if you know anyone of note. My mind
on their unhappy state is fixed alone."
- Then said he, " He whose beard flows down behind 106
over his swarthy shoulders,—in the day
when in all Greece, scarce one man could be found,—
- And cradles of men-children empty lay,— 109
Augurs in Aulis, Calchas and he, declared
when the first ship's rope should be cut away.
- Eurypylos his name : but how he fared 112
you know from some part of my tragic song,
who have the whole of it so often heard.

INFERNO

- The other who, slim-waisted, moves along 115
is Michael Scot, who once was known to be
a master such false conjurers among.
- Guido Bonatti and Asdente see : 118
the last repents too late that he forswore
leather and waxed thread for this mystery.
- See these sad women who to spin gave o'er, 121
to sew, or weave, that they some ill might bring
with herbs and images and magic lore.
- But come, already downward voyaging, 124
Cain with his thorn-scrub touches on the line
where the great Sea round Seville draws her ring.
- Last night the Moon was full, nor did she shine 127
hurtful upon you as your pathway lay
where glooming shadows of the brake entwine."
- Thus spoke he as we went upon our way. 130

INFERNO CANTO XXI

So thus from bridge to bridge we wandered on, 1
 speaking of things my verse may leave aside,
 until we reached the arch's highest stone.
 Then paused we by the other Cavern wide 4
 of Malebolgè, whence vain cries arose
 from depths where wondrous darkness seemed to abide.
 As when, at Venice, fall the winter snows, 7
 about the harbour boiling pitch is seen
 wherewith they seek their leaking keels to close,
 Driven from the seas by storms, and each is keen 10
 to build his boat anew, or to caulk tight
 the hull that strained in many a storm has been :
 Some men the prow and some the stern make right, 13
 others shape oars, or heavy cables twine,
 mend the foresails, or split mainsails unite.
 So, not by fire, but by some power divine 16
 a sea of pitch in boiling tumult lay
 that, glutinous, clung about its margin line.
 Gazing, I only saw the bubbles play, 19
 and one great spangled swell that, lifting, rose,
 heaving, a moment, and then died away.
 While I this scene beneath regarded close 22
 my Guide addressed me, " Ah, take care," he cried,
 and drew me towards him from my watching pose.
 I turned as one keen to be satisfied 25
 at sight of what he has more need to flee,
 by which once seen, he is so horrified
 That terror conquers curiosity ! 28
 and there behind us, a black Fiend I saw
 come running up the steep acclivity.
 His gestures did my spirit overawe 31
 and aspect horrible, as he leapt along,
 fluttering with lifted wing and nimble claw.
 Upon his shoulders, high and sharp and strong, 34
 a sinner squatted, forkwise, whom he bore
 grasping his ankles as they downward hung.

INFERNO

- Then "Malebranchè!" cried he, with a roar, 37
 "ye of our bridge. See, here, a Magistrate
 of Lucca!—plunge him, while I go for more.
 Many a barrator have I in that State, 40
 where, save Bonturo, there is none but will
 for gain, out of a 'No' a 'Yes' create."
 He flung him down and back along the hill 43
 scampered, nor ever mastiff after thief
 sped quicklier his purpose to fulfil.
 The sinner sank, then rose as for relief. 46
 at him the Devils, jeering in the shade,
 cried, "Here no Sacred Face of your belief
 Shines, and your bath in Serchio is not made. 49
 If you would save your body from our claws
 strive not from out the boiling pitch to wade."
 Then, hooking him with grapnels, without pause, 52
 they cried, "He must lie covered who would play
 the cheat, and secretly evade the laws."
 Even so do cooks to scullions show the way 55
 of plunging deep the flesh within the pot
 with hook, that it afloat, there, do not stay.
 My Master said, "That they discover not 58
 your presence with me, do you crouching lie
 behind that rock, where shelter may be got,
 And be not moved by what their enmity 61
 may wreak on me, for all their wiles I know:
 not the first time this venture do I try."
 So passed he o'er the bridge's height, below, 64
 descending on the sixth shore, and indeed,
 it there behoved him a bold front to show.
 With fury, like those dogs of mastiff breed 67
 that rush upon the beggar poor and old,
 who standing, begs some comfort for his need,
 So rushed these Devils from their secret hold 70
 beneath the bridge, their hooks before them borne.
 then he, "Let none of you be over-bold.
 Before with these your pincers I am torn, 73
 let one advance. With him I fain would speak
 ere he my limbs shall order to be shorn."

INFERNO

"Go, Malacoda," was their fiendish shriek : 76
 and one advanced, the others standing still.
 "What good," he said, "from conference does he seek?"
 "Ah, Malacoda," said he, "free from ill, 79
 if through these horrors and these perils dread,
 you see me still unharmed, the Almighty Will
 Must have conducted me, and kind Fates led. 82
 let us, then, pass : for heaven, through this wild track,
 has given me one to be safe pilotèd."
 Then the fiend's fury was so ta'en aback, 85
 he dropped his hook about his feet, and cried,
 "Now let this shade be safe from your attack."
 And then my Master called me to his side : 88
 "Come," said he, "you who on this bridge's height
 sit cowering. You no longer need to hide."
 Thus, running forward came I with delight. 91
 and yet, the Fiends before us gathered so,
 I feared the faith that they to us might plight,
 As once I saw Caprona's army show 94
 fear, as they issued thence, surrendering,
 to see around them, such a numerous foe.
 I hastened onward then, and tried to cling 97
 near to my Guide, nor turned my eyes away
 from those wild faces, fiercely threatening.
 Their hooks they lowered : "Shall I lightly flay 100
 his rump?" one Devil to another cried.
 they shouted, "Ay, show him a little play!"
 But then, the Devil who had met my Guide, 103
 turning, the other's fury quick restrained :
 "Scaramiglione, put your rage aside!"
 Then said he, "Here, no progress can be gained 106
 further, the Sixth arch lies in ruins now,
 and broken utterly has long remained.
 If onward still you press, this vale below 109
 you needs must follow which will lead you on
 to where another rock rears its steep brow.
 When yesterday had five hours later gone, 112
 twelve hundred, six and sixty years had sped
 since this destruction of the cliff was done.

INFERNO

See, by my company you shall be led 115
to find if any seek their pains to evade.
go with them,—treachery you need not fear.
Come, Alichino," turning, then, he said, 118
"and Calcabrina,—Come, Cagnazzo, too,
let Barbariccia your guide be made.
Go, Libicocco, and Draghignazzo, you 121
fanged Ciriatto, Graffiacane, go :
and Rubicante will make up the crew,
With Farfarello. Search the pool below 124
that boils : and these two safely lead to where
the cliffs another passage onward show."
"O Master, what is that which I see there ? 127
fain without escort would I go," cried I.
"you know the way,—for nought else do I care
If your sense fail not, do you not descry 130
how the Fiends grind their teeth on us and frown
with brows of horrible malignity ?"
Then he to me, "Fear not. Let them look down 133
with grinning snarls, as they are wont to do,
on those poor sinners who in torment drown."
Then by the leftward margin did they go, 136
each had his tongue tight clasped his teeth between,
waiting until their Chief a sign should show,
Which he gave forth with trumpeting obscene. 139

INFERNO CANTO XXII

Oft, long ago, an army have I seen 1
 change camp, for fight, or on review intent,
 oft troops, too, that in full retreat have been.
 Forays within your borders have been sent, 4
 Arezzo, and armed bands have roamed about,
 full of the pride of joust and tournament,
 With chiming bells, and blowing horns, and shout, 7
 and signal breaking out from Castle wall,—
 fashions our own, or brought us from without,—
 But never to a stranger marching call 10
 have I seen horsemen or footsoldiers move,
 nor ships following the stars, or the land-fall.
 Along with these ten Devils, in a drove, 13
 we went,—an escort wild !—but, “ Saints in shrines,
 and boors in taverns, fit companions prove.”
 The boiling pitch beneath, and the dark lines 16
 that marked its rim I was most keen to see,
 and the sad race within its dread confines.
 As dolphins, leaping from the darkling sea 19
 signal to sailors of the tempest near,
 and warn them from its rising rage to flee,
 So each of these his scalding back would rear 22
 to ease his torment upward from the deep,
 then, quick as lightning, each would disappear.
 Or, as the frogs by a pond’s margin peep 25
 out of the waters with their snouts alone,
 and their squat forms beneath the surface keep,
 So stood these sinners, everywhere,—anon, 28
 when Barbariccia advanced, and neared
 the bubbling margin’s brink, they all were gone.
 I saw with horror one who then appeared,— 31
 as will some single frog,—whose visage showed
 whilst all the others to the depths had sheered.
 Then Graffiacane, who beside him stood, 34
 struck at him, hooking his pitch-clotted hair,
 and dragged him like an otter, on his goad.

INFERNO

I knew these Fiends' names, for I heard with care 37
 how each was called, when chosen, and how they
 addressed each other in their converse there.
 "Oh, Rubicante, now your sharp claws lay 40
 upon his body till you flay him quite."
 so cried, as with one voice, that cursed array.
 Then I, "Oh, Master mine, guide me aright 43
 to know who this unfortunate may be
 so fallen beneath their devilish despite."
 Close to the other's side then turnèd he 46
 and asked from whence he came, who thus replied :
 "The Kingdom of Navarre gave birth to me.
 My mother placed me by a noble's side 49
 though my own father was a scoundrel, prone
 his wealth, and others', too, to scatter wide.
 Then did I serve by good Tebaldo's throne, 52
 and there I fell to fraud and cheating foul,
 crimes which amid this heat I now bemoan."
 Then Ciriatto from whose boar-like jowl 55
 there issued cruel fangs, wounded his side,
 proving their sharpness on the wretched soul,
 As mice by cruel cats are scarified. 58
 but Barbariccia caught him back. "Stay there,
 while I thus hold him with my fork," he cried.
 Then turned his visage to my Master. "Ere 61
 another wreak on him some cruel wrong,
 ask of him what you would that he declare."
 My Master spoke, "Is there your crowd among, 64
 there, in the boiling pitch, any who bear
 the Latin name?" He said, "It is not long
 Since I had speech with one who came from near 67
 that country. Would that I with him might be,
 then would I neither hook nor grapnel fear."
 Cried Libicocco,—"Too humane are we." 70
 and at his arm with cruel pitchfork caught.
 twisting, he tore it with ferocity.
 His lower limbs, then, Draghignazzo sought 73
 as if to seize. Their Chief, when he espied
 their acts, wheeled round, his face with anger fraught.

INFERNO

Then, when their rage was somewhat pacified, to him who gazed upon his wounded frame, my Master without further waiting, cried,	76
“ From whom, then, was it you so sadly came, as you have said, to land upon this shore ? ”	79
“ Fra Gomita,” he answered, “ was his name, Who from Gallura hails : a boundless store of fraud he was :—among his master’s foes in prison held, his praise grew more and more.	82
Money he took, and liberated those as he says, ‘ On the quiet.’ Every post he held. To leadership of cheats he rose.	85
Coupled with him is Michel Zanchè’s ghost of Logodoro : they for ever speak of matters bounded by Sardinia’s coast.	88
Oh me ! look at that Devil’s grinning cheek,— more would I say but fear his enmity, to claw my pate I know he fain would seek.”	91
The Fiends’ commander, turning rapidly on Farfarello, who rolled cruel eyes, cried, “ Get aside, you Bird of villainy ! ”	94
“ If others you would see, or histories would learn,” the trembling shade began again, “ Tuscan or Lombard, I will make them rise,	97
But bid these Fiends their horrid claws refrain so that they may not fear their cruel hate. then I alone who in this place remain	100
Will summon seven others from their fate by a low whistle as our custom is for each to signal safety to his mate.”	103
Cagnazzo raised his hideous snout at this, shaking his head. “ A scheme malicious planned to get below by this device of his.”	106
Then he who had all kinds of fraud at hand replied, “ Of malice is it that I bring more grief on those that will around me stand ? ”	109
Alichino, then, his fellows countering, cried to him, “ If you cast yourself beneath, on foot I shall not chase you, but on wing,	112

INFERNO

Fluttering and skimming where the bubbles seethe. 115
 from this height, and the shielding bank, then, fare
 to see if you can flout us to our teeth."

O Reader, for a new sport now prepare. 118
 each one then gazed out to the further side,
 he first who most unwilling was to dare.

The Navarrese chose well his time, applied 121
 firmly his feet upon the rock, and sought
 quickly the depths, and their pursuit defied.

Each one with anger and remorse was fraught 124
 that they had lost him, most of all the Fiend
 who caused it. "Ha," he shouted, "you are caught."

Little his gain. In vain his wings he leaned 127
 upon the wind, and strove, outstripped by fear.
 he rose from where the pitch his quarry screened,

As oft a wild duck plunges in the mere 130
 before the hunting-falcon which wheels off
 baffled to see his prey thus disappear.

Then Calcabrina flew with many a scoff 133
 after him, fain the escape of that poor shade
 should for another fight prove cause enough.

And since the trickster could no more be flayed, 136
 he turned his claws upon his brother Sprite.
 over the pitch their battle was arrayed.

The other, a stout falcon, full of fight, 139
 so strove and clung, that, to the boiling lake
 both of them, fiercely struggling, fell downright.

The flaming torture did their anger slake : 142
 and yet they could not rise, so the pitch cloyed
 their members that their wings they could not shake.

Then Barbariccia, with the rest, annoyed 145
 sent four, quick flying, to the other shore,
 who swift with all their grappels armed, deployed

And each to his appointed station bore. 148
 they stretched to where among the burning mess
 the Fiends, half cooked, still wallowed more and more.

And there we left them in their grim distress. 151

INFERNO CANTO XXIII

Silently and in solitude complete, 1
 we walked, my Guide in front, and I behind,
 as Minor Friars are wont to pace the street.
 Then that old tale of Æsop's came to mind, 4
 recalled by the two Devils' furious fight,
 where frog and mouse in fatal noose were twined.
 No closer 'mo' and 'issa' do unite ¹ 7
 in sense than these tales a like meaning bear,
 from first to last considering them aright.
 Their sense as I continued to compare, 10
 within my soul arose another thought
 that weighed on me, and doubled all my fear.
 I pondered thus: "These Devils now are fraught 13
 with anger towards us for the dire disgrace
 and contumely we have upon them brought.
 When rage by wickedness has ta'en its place, 16
 them shall we see as furious on our track
 as hound upon the hare he holds in chase."
 My hair rose up in fear, and, looking back 19
 intently, long I paused: then to my Guide
 I spoke, "O Master, much I fear attack
 Unless we both in some concealment hide 22
 from these clawed Devils.—They behind us come.—
 I seem to feel their presence at my side."
 Then he, "If I a mirror had been made 25
 I could not then reflect your outward show
 quicklier than are to me your thoughts displayed.
 These thoughts of yours my own do follow so, 28
 alike in meaning, even alike in face
 that both, I see, to one conclusion flow.
 If, upon our right hand, it be the case 31
 downward the bank so slopes that we can gain
 the cleft, we may escape this dreaded chase."
 He scarce had ceased this counsel to explain 34
 when, lo, I saw them with their outspread wings
 draw near, intent our capture to obtain.

¹ Both words mean "now."

INFERNO

My Guide me seized, as some fond mother springs 37
 sudden from sleep, aroused by noise, and sees
 the approaching flames, then clasps her child who clings
 About her, and all her anxieties 40
 centered in him, she pauses not to don
 even a simple shift, but naked flies.
 Down from the summit, all of jagged stone 43
 supine, he dropped upon the hanging wall
 of rock that over the next gulf was thrown.
 No faster rushes on some conduit small 46
 driving the wheel-spokes of a country mill,
 when it is close upon the blades to fall,
 Than ran my Master down that craggy hill, 49
 bearing me on his breast as though I were
 his child, not his companion only still.
 Scarce had our feet found resting-places there, 52
 within the hollow, than the Devils showed
 above us. Now, their presence ceased to scare.
 For the High Providence that had bestowed 55
 on them their charge within the Fifth Deep Place,
 power to pass further had to none allowed.
 Down there, we came upon a painted race, 58
 who slowly moved around with many a tear,
 weighed down, and all subdued by their disgrace.
 Each did a cloak with hood voluminous wear, 61
 hung low and heavily his eyes before,
 like those the monks who dwell in Cologne bear.
 All were with bright gold ornamented o'er. 64
 Within was heavy lead. With these to vie
 as straw seemed those which Frederick's victims wore.
 O weary mantle for eternity ! 67
 we turned, as heretofore, to left, more close
 to hear the sad wail of their misery.
 But so were they o'erburdened with their woes 70
 to languid movement, that, in our advance
 ever new faces at each step arose.
 So to my Guide I said, " You may, perchance, 73
 find someone who by act or name is known.
 as on we move cast round a questioning glance."

INFERNO

Then one who knew the Tuscan tongue,—my own,—
 cried to us, “Stay, O stay your wandering feet, 77
 you who through this dark air so fast move on.
 It may be that I can your wishes meet.” 79
 Then turned my Guide to me, and, “Wait,” he said,
 “go with him, let your foot his pace repeat.”
 I stayed me then, while two of these displayed 82
 in soul and countenance a keen intent
 to greet me, but their burdens them delayed,
 And the strait path. When, with their vision bent 85
 sideways, they came, they dumbly looked on me :
 then turned : and speaking each to each, they went.
 “He is alive :—his breathing you can see. 88
 If he be dead what privilege is his
 to go from this our leaden covering free ?”
 Then said they, “Tuscan, you who now to this 91
 college of hypocrites have come, avow
 who you may be, nor take our call amiss.”
 Then I to them, “My birth was by the flow 94
 of the fair river Arno, in that great
 City :—my body as it was is now.
 Who are you on whose cheeks disconsolate 97
 sorrow distils her moisture as I gaze ?
 what pain is yours whose cowls so scintillate ?”
 “These hoods,” said one, “with orange hues ablaze 100
 are formed, within, of lead so ponderous
 the balance creaks with the huge load it weighs.
 Frati Godenti were we two, and us 103
 Bologna bore : he Loderingo named,
 I Catalano. Place illustrious
 We held as rulers in your City famed, 106
 where, formerly, one only, ruled its peace.
 our nature the Cardingo has proclaimed.”
 “Brothers, your woes—” but I was fain to cease 109
 and said no more, for suddenly, I perceived
 one crucified :—stakes hindered his release,—
 Who writhed to see me, and his breast relieved 112
 with breath that shook his beard. And then began
 Friar Catalano, as these sighs were heaved

INFERNO

- To address me thus, "Lo, that transfixèd man 115
 counselled the Pharisees. That one must die
 in torture for the people, was his plan.
- Now, stretched out naked, as you see him lie 118
 each one who passes treads on him, and he
 their varying weight and force is made to try.
- So in this ditch his father-in-law, too, see 121
 debased with those that in that Council were
 which brought upon the Jews calamity."
- Then saw I Virgil, marvelling greatly, stare 124
 at him who on this cross was doomed to lie
 fixed in eternal exile and despair.
- Then said he to the monk, "If lawfully 127
 and freely you may speak, I fain would know
 if on the right we may some passage try
- By which we from this gulf may onward go 130
 without those evil angels being bound
 to guide our footsteps and our path to show."
- Then he replied, "A rock is to be found 133
 nearer than you expect which from the ring
 that bounds these valleys, spans each craggy round,
 But here 'tis breached and makes no covering. 136
 But you can mount upon its ruined steep
 that slopes adown, this gulf encumbering."
- My Master stood a moment thinking deep, 139
 with bent head. Then he said, "False news supplied
 that Fiend whose grapnel makes the sinners weep."
- "They told me at Bologna," he replied, 142
 "enough of all the Devil's wickedness,—
 Liar,—and Father of all who yet have lied."
- Then forward went my Guide with eagerness 145
 in seeming anger. I behind him sped
 leaving them thus deep burdened in distress,
 And followed where his honoured footsteps led. 148

INFERNO CANTO XXIV

When, in the beauty of the youngling year, 1
 the Sun in wet Aquarius dips his locks,
 and night and day of equal length appear,
 And when the rime, spread o'er the landscape, mocks 4
 the spotless whiteness of her sister snow
 but cannot linger long on fields or rocks,
 The countryman, whose winter stock sinks low, 7
 looks out and in his heart there rises fear
 on seeing all his pasture white below.
 He strikes his thigh, and wanders here and there, 10
 like some poor wretch who knows not what to do ;
 then, suddenly, he smiles with better cheer
 To see the earth resume its warmer hue : 13
 in an hour's time, seizing upon his crook
 he drives his flocks afield with glad halloo.
 So, when my Master's face a shadow took 16
 of anger, I was seized with fear that fled
 when on my wound he placed his healing look.
 For, as we reached that bridge so ruinèd, 19
 my Guide turned to me with that face benign
 which at the Mount's foot I encounterèd.
 Opening his arms, and gazing on the line 22
 of broken precipice with careful eyes,
 he caught me, having chosen his design,
 Even like to one who estimates and tries, 25
 considering how his purpose may succeed.
 so, raising me up these acclivities,
 From rock to rock, my footsteps did he lead 28
 saying, " On this projection take your hold,
 but try first if its strength will serve your need."
 It was no road for those with cloaks of gold 31
 and lead. Scarce could we mount,—I by his aid,
 supported thus, and he of spirit mould.
 And were it not that this steep barricade 34
 was lower here than elsewhere, neither I
 nor he, perhaps, this passage could have made.

INF ER NO

But, because Malebolgè sloped doth lie 37
 towards the deepest gulf of the abyss,
 it follows that each valley here is high,
 And there, slants downward to the precipice. 40
 we came at last to where the uttermost
 stone from the solid rock dissevered is.
 My lungs this steep ascent did so exhaust 43
 that, reaching to the top, I sat me down,
 for power of moving further I had lost.
 "Now," cried my Master, "let no sloth be shown : 46
 for he who rests on feathers, or long space
 under soft coverlets, remains unknown :
 And he who wins no fame, but lives his days 49
 thus, leaves behind him but the vision fleet
 of smoke in air, or foam in watery ways.
 Rise, then, and with your soul this weakness meet, 52
 for by its power all battles may be won,
 if the gross frame drag it not to defeat.
 A longer climb we yet must enter on. 55
 'tis not enough these stairs behind us lie :
 heed me : and for your good let us begone."
 Then did I rise showing more sturdily 58
 furnished with breathing than I felt within,
 and cried, "Go on, eager and strong am I."
 So up again the cliff that ringed us in 61
 we went. More rugged, difficult and steep
 than that, it seemed, our toils had served to win.
 Climbing, I spoke that I a show might keep 64
 of fortitude, at which a voice we heard
 unused to speech, out of the hollow deep.
 Though I had reached the top, I knew no word, 67
 hearkening high up upon the bridge's span,
 but thought the speaker seemed by anger stirred.
 Downward I gazed. The eyes of living man 70
 served not to pierce the dark profundity.
 so cried I, "Pass on, Master, if you can,
 To the rock's edge beyond, and let us be 73
 lower within the wall, for listening here,
 nothing I understand, nor, gazing, see."

INFERNO

- “ My answer in my action will appear,” 76
 replied he, “ for to such a fair request
 the wordless act is best in those who hear.”
- Down went we to the place where, with the crest 79
 of the Eighth wall the bridge its junction made
 and there, the dark abyss was manifest.
- Within, it was with horrible snakes o’erlaid, 82
 of aspect so malignant and so weird
 this memory makes my very blood afraid.
- Her sands let Libya boast not, that have reared 85
 chelydri, jaculi, and pareae,
 cenchri and amphisbaenae,—ne’er appeared
- Such crowded horrors, or such pests as they 88
 in all the Ethiopic wastes, or those
 that stretch along the Red Sea’s water-way.
- Amid this cruel mass of swarming woes 91
 naked and terrified, men ran about,
 no charm nor shelter could afford repose.
- Snakes bound their hands behind them thrusting out 94
 through their loins, pierced with horrid agony,
 each writhing tail knotted with poisonous snout.
- Then lo ! at one who by our side passed by, 97
 a serpent sprang, and where his neck is placed
 upon his shoulders, bit him suddenly.
- No quicklier could ‘ O ’ or ‘ I ’ be traced 100
 in writing, than he burned in flaming fire,
 and dropped to ashes, all his shape effaced.
- Thus fallen, the powder of this ghastly pyre 103
 re-formed itself, and all at once regained
 its former shape and countenance entire.
- So has it by great sages been explained 106
 the Phoenix, dead, in life again appears
 each time five hundred years have been attained :
- No herb she eats, nor any grain : on tears 109
 of incense and amomum sole sustained :
 as cerements, oils of nard and myrrh she wears.
- As one who ignorant of his foe remains 112
 struck down by some strange demon to the ground,
 or other force that human acts restrains,

INFERNO

Who, rising, gazing with intent looks round, 115
 bewildered by his sudden fate,—in pain,
 wails his calamity with signs profound,
 So was the sinner as he rose again. 118
 oh, Power of God, how terrible and dread
 from which such awful blows of vengeance rain !
 My Guide then asked his name. He answered, 121
 “ From Tuscany, not long ago, I fell.
 down to this dreadful gullet was I sped.
 In bestial life, not human, did I dwell, 124
 mule-like,—I, Vanni Fucci,—beast was I,
 and for my den, Pistoia suited well.”
 My Guide I craved, “ Oh, let him not pass by, 127
 but ask him what the crime that flung him here,
 I knew him in his blood and villainy.”
 The aspect of the sinner seemed sincere : 130
 towards me he turned his mind and face, whereon
 the blush of rising shame began to appear.
 Then said he, “ More the pain that falls upon 133
 my spirit that you meet me where I lie,
 than came when I from life above was thrown.
 To what you ask of me I must reply. 136
 so far am I engulfed, for that I stole
 fair furnishings from out the Sacristy.
 ’Twas charged on others falsely. Lest your soul 139
 rejoice in this sad sight, if e’er again
 you win from out these realms of gloom and dole,
 Open your ears to my announcement plain :— 142
 Lo, first,—Pistoia, of the Neri thinned,—
 new laws and people Florence shall obtain.
 From Val di Magra, Mars brings fiery wind 145
 of war, wrapped up, within a turbid cloud
 with blasts of rage and furious tempests lined.
 Then, on Piceno’s fields, the battle loud 148
 shall rend the thunderous mist from off the plain.
 wounded from it shall lie each Bianco proud.
 This do I speak that it may give you pain.” 151

INFERNO CANTO XXV

Soon as this prophecy he had declaimed, 1
the thief, with gesture coarse, raised both his hands.
“Take that,” he cried, “oh God,—at Thee ’tis aimed.”
Thenceforth the snakes were friends to me. In bands 4
of its own body, one his neck entwined
as though ‘Speak nothing more’ were its commands.
Another closely seemed his arms to bind 7
twisting itself in front of him so tight
no room for slightest movement could he find.
Pistoia, oh, Pistoia, better might 10
you burn to earth and all your towers fall
than that your seed should grow to eviller height !
In Hell’s dark circles, none can I recall 13
more insolent against his God than he :—
not even that man who fell from Thebes’s wall.
He fled nor spoke again, and instantly 16
I saw a Centaur come with raging cries,
shouting, “Where can the sullen fellow be ?”
Nor do I deem that where Maremma lies 19
more snakes abound than on his haunch were laid
to where our human form begins to rise.
A dragon on his shoulders was displayed 22
wide-winged, by whom each one encountered
in flaming fire was suddenly arrayed.
“Lo, there is Cacus,” then my Master said, 25
“by whom, beneath the Mount of Aventine,
oft-times a lake of blood has been outspread.
He with his brethren marches not in line 28
because of that great fraud he one time wrought
in stealing for himself the neighbouring kine.
His crooked ways by Hercules’ onslaught 31
were ended, who a hundred blows rained down
with his great club,—save nine he felt them not.”
While thus he spoke, the Centaur on had flown, 34
and under us, three spirits came along
whose presence was to both of us unknown

INFERNO

Till "Who are you?" they cried. Then did our tongue
 pause in our story, and as we beheld 38
 these shades, on them alone our gaze was flung.
 I knew them not, but, by that chance compelled 40
 which happens oft, when two or more begin
 talking by name, our ignorance was dispelled.
 One cried, "Where does Cianfa stay?" To win 43
 my Guide's attention for the nonce, I laid
 my finger upright between nose and chin.
 If, Reader, to believe what will be said 46
 you hesitate, no wonder, for by me,
 who saw it, scarce can credence full be paid.
 For, as my eyes gazed on them steadfastly, 49
 a serpent furnished with six feet, sprang out
 and clasped itself about one of the three.
 The middle feet were twined his paunch about, 52
 and the front limbs his arms enclosed, whereon
 both cheeks were bitten by its poisonous snout.
 The hind legs round about his thighs were thrown, 55
 and through between them went its sinuous tail,
 upward recurved, his back and loins upon.
 Never did ivy o'er a tree's stem trail 58
 so closely as this horrible monster strained
 its twining strength his members to assail.
 Thus fixed, and stuck together they remained 61
 like heated wax, and, altering their hue,
 each with the other's colouring was stained:
 As paper, in a burning flame may show 64
 a brown edge chased before the flame, not yet
 black, while the pure white vanishes from view.
 The other two, watching this strange onset 67
 cried, "Oh, Agnello, altered seems your ghost:
 'tis neither one, nor two together met!"
 Then the two heads together closely thrust 70
 twined into one: the faces mingled so,
 that in one countenance, they both were lost.
 Four mingled arms united into two: 73
 thighs, legs, and breast into such limbs were twined
 as we of human mould may never know.

INFERNO

- No trace of their first shape remained behind. 76
the perverse image, neither both nor one,
strove, then, with languorous step its way to find.
- Then, as the lizard in the blazing sun 79
of dog-days, wandering from shade to shade,
across the path, like lightning seems to run,
- So, towards the other two, a rush was made 82
by a small reptile livid-hued and black
as pepper seed, that fiery rage displayed.
- On one of them it made a fierce attack 85
piercing that part by which we first are fed,
and then before him fell, stretched on its back.
- The wounded one looked down, but nothing said, 88
he only yawned, still standing on his feet
as though by sleep or fever mastered.
- His gazing eyes the reptile's seemed to meet. 91
smoke from his wound, and from the reptile's throat
mingled, and made their union thus complete.
- Let Lucan now be silent, he who wrote 94
of how Sabellus and Nasidius fell,
and let him stay this awful tale to note.
- Let Ovid cease of Cadmus' fate to tell : 97
I envy not his story of the snake,
or Arethusa, changed into a well.
- For never did his poet's fancy make 100
two beings change their substance, face to face,
ready, each one, the other's form to take.
- To such a law each answered in his place. 103
the reptile's tail divided, and the shade
together, tried his lower limbs to brace.
- The legs and even the thighs together made 106
so close and firm a junction, that, between,
no sign of separation was betrayed.
- The tail, now slit, as these limbs once had been, 109
was gradually enclosed in softer skin
while those in harder covering were seen.
- Then did the arms the armpits draw within, 112
and as they shortened thus, with equal pace
to lengthen did the reptile's feet begin.

INFERNO

- Its hinder feet each other did enlace 115
 and grew into the hidden part, while he
 thrust forth two under feet from out that place.
 While the smoke changed its colour we could see 118
 how hair from one part was eradicate,
 and on another spread luxuriantly.
 One rose upright, the other fell prostrate. 121
 nor did they turn those impious lights whereby
 each gave his own and took the other's state.
 He who stood up strained his face carefully, 124
 till, from superfluous flesh, on either side,
 ears from his cheeks extended seemed to lie.
 That which remained his visage magnified 127
 into a nose, and, under it, his face
 amply, with lips protuberant supplied.
 He, too, who lay below, to longer space 130
 stretched out his countenance, and his ears restrained
 as does the snail its pointed horns efface.
 His tongue divided that was well ordained 133
 for speech : the other's seemed as one to be
 within his jaws. The furious smoke now waned.
 This soul, brute-fashioned, now began to flee 136
 hissing along the valley, and as it sped,
 the other followed spluttering horribly.
 He turned his new-found shoulders round and said, 139
 "so, upon all fours, shall Buoso crawl
 as I have done along this valley's bed."
 Thus saw I change and re-change over all 142
 the depths of this the Seventh Pit. My pen
 prays pardon as its horrors I recall.
 And though my mind was sorely troubled then, 145
 and even my eyes perplexed, they could not fly
 so fast but that I knew their shades, these men.
 One, Puccio Sciancato, easily, 148
 I singled out. He, only, was not turned
 of the first three, to vile deformity.
 The other's loss hast thou, Gaville, mourned. 151

INFERNO CANTO XXVI

Rejoice, oh, Florence, since thou art so great, 1
 over the sea and land thy wings are spread,
 and, even in Hell, thy name they celebrate !
 Among the thieves, five have I mentioned, 4
 thy citizens, at which shame bows me low.
 on thee, from this, is little honour shed.
 But if, near morning, dreams some truth do show 7
 erelong thou shalt endure what Prato, yea,
 and many others, long that thou should'st know.
 If at this moment it should come, I say 10
 it would not be too early,—let it fall !—
 heavier my load the longer the delay.
 Thence we departed by the rocky wall 13
 whose curbstones we had trod before. My Guide
 preceded me with aid continual.
 For in our lonely path on either side 16
 were crags and buttresses, on whose rough front
 the foot failed if the hand were not applied.
 I sorrowed then, and still my sorrows mount 19
 within me, musing on these things,—indeed,
 I curb my genius more than was my wont
 Lest it go on where virtue does not lead 22
 so that if by kind star or other aid
 good comes, I do not grudge myself that meed.
 The peasant, resting in a sunny glade 25
 when he who gladdens all the earth with light
 shines strongest,—when the slowly gathering shade
 Brings forth the gnat,—sees, in the early night 28
 where he has laboured at his vines and tilled,
 the fire-flies gleam with twinklings infinite ;
 So the Eighth Vault with gleaming lights was filled, 31
 as I could plainly see, descending sheer.
 as he, whose mockers were so quickly killed
 By vengeance of the she-bears, saw appear 34
 Elijah's chariot as it upward turned
 and viewed its fiery horses heavenward rear,

INFERNO

For to his vision, as the earth it spurned, 37
 no shape was visible but the clear flame
 that bright as an ascending cloudlet burned ;
 So in the narrow fosse lights went and came, 40
 nought showing what they held but every one
 had seized upon some wretched sinner's frame.
 I rose, and, had I not laid hold upon 43
 a jagged fragment of the bridge, I should,
 unpushed, into the depths below have gone.
 My Guide who this my keen observance viewed 46
 said, " In these flames each spirit is enclosed,
 there swathed in fire with which he is imbued."
 " Master," I said, " already I supposed 49
 this to have been their fate, and now I know.
 and I would fain this matter were disclosed
 Who is the shade within that moving fire 52
 parted above, as when Eteocles
 lay with his brother on the funeral pyre ? "
 He answered me at once, " Know you that there 55
 are Diomede and Ulysses, one in pain
 as erst united in hostilities.
 Within the flame they still in tears complain 58
 of that vile ambush of the Horse, that led
 to issue of the noble Roman strain.
 Deidamia, mourning Achilles dead, 61
 they weep for, and the stolen Palladium
 that brought this punishment upon their head."
 " If in these clinging fires they are not dumb, 64
 master, I pray,—a thousand times I pray,—
 that to some converse with these shades I come
 And that I may be here allowed to stay 67
 till that forked flame approaches : you may see
 how my desire increases with delay."
 He said, " Your wish is formed so worthily, 70
 that I can not oppose it, but take care
 that your appeal to them restrained may be.
 Let me speak. Of your thoughts I am aware, 73
 and they, to your address, as Grecians proud,
 to deign sufficient answer might not care."

INFERNO

Then, when the double flame its burning showed 76
 near us, and time and place to him seemed meet,
 I heard him to these spirits speak aloud :
 " Oh, ye, together doomed to fiery heat, 79
 if I from you in life did merit aught,
 if full that merit, or if incomplete,
 When I, above, my lofty Verses wrought, 82
 do not fly from me : but let one explain
 where he, lost soul, for death's oblivion sought."
 The larger horn of flame began to strain 85
 and shake with ruffled murmurings, as when
 upon a fire the strong wind strikes amain.
 Moving its flame upwards and back again, 88
 as though it were the tongue that spoke, it threw
 outward a voice, and spoke to him. " Ah, then,
 When from the toils of Circe I withdrew 91
 who, prisoned in Gaeta held me for a year,
 ere, by Æneas given, that name it knew,
 Neither did fondness for my offspring dear, 94
 nor reverence for my father, nor the love
 that should have stayed Penelope to cheer,
 Restrain me from the keen desire to rove 97
 throughout the world, and some experience gain
 of vice and virtue that men's spirits move.
 Forth did I set upon the deep wide main. 100
 one ship contained me and the little band
 that chose beside me faithful to remain.
 As far as Spain the ocean's bounds I scanned, 103
 even to Morocco and the clustered isles
 that, bathed in ocean, by Sardinia stand.
 Old were we, tired by many laboured miles, 106
 when we came near that strait where Hercules
 cleft the great hills into opposing piles
 Lest foolish men should wander beyond these. 109
 to right we passed Seville, nor did we rest
 by Ceuta, ploughing through the unknown seas.
 ' Oh, brothers,' then I cried, ' since to the West 112
 we have attained through dangers manifold,
 spend we our life's short vigil in this quest.

INFERNNO

Let not your senses fail you, but be bold 115
 to sail, and find what strange adventures yet
 the unpeopled lands behind the Sun may hold.
 Think on your lineage, nor your sires forget ; 118
 to live the life of brutes you were not made
 but virtue to pursue, and knowledge get.
 So well did I my comrades dear persuade 121
 by this brief speech, so eager they to go,
 that scarcely could I have their voyage stayed.
 With stern to Eastward, we began to row 124
 with wing-like oars upon our foolish way :
 to leftward ever moved our eager prow.
 That night we saw the Southern Pole's array 127
 of shining stars, and ours was drawn so low
 that scarce above the ocean's rim it lay.
 Five times the Moon above us was aglow, 130
 five times extinguished, since our boat first sailed
 this narrow passage of the ocean through.
 Then there appeared a mighty Mountain, veiled 133
 with distance, and it seemed to me more high
 than any that my eyes, till then, had hailed.
 We joyed, but joy, alas, fell suddenly 136
 to grief, for there arose a mighty wind
 from that new land and struck in passing by
 Our vessel's prow. With the whole sea combined, 139
 three times she turned around. At the fourth sweep
 her stern rose, and she sank. Another Mind
 So willed it ; and above us closed the deep." 142

INFERNO CANTO XXVII

Now was the flame upright : its voice was still : 1
 quiet it was, and then from us it went,
 allowed to go by the sweet poet's will.
 Then one behind it came. Our eyes were bent 4
 upon its summit, for there came to us
 sounds as of speech in strange confusion blent,
 As that Sicilian bull was clamorous 7
 first with the moans of him,—and it was right,—
 who, with his labouring file had tuned it thus.
 It bellowed so with horror and affright, 10
 that, though it was of brass, its cries appeared
 the shrieks of one in pain and piteous plight.
 Thus, as they first arose, its words were heard 13
 mingled together in the fire compressed,
 and thus constrained into a language weird.
 But after they had reached the flaming crest, 16
 that vibrated with motion given below
 by what the tongue in speaking had expressed,
 We heard it say, " Oh, you, towards whom I throw 19
 my words and who but now in Lombard tongue
 said : ' Now, no more I need you, you may go,'
 Though late I come this gloomy vale along, 22
 let it not fret you here awhile to stay
 seeing it frets me not, these fires among.
 If in this blinded realm you are astray, 25
 fallen from the pleasant Latian land afar,
 from whence my wickedness I bore away,
 Say if the Romagnuoli are at war, 28
 or peace, for from Urbino's hills am I
 near where the earliest springs of Tiber are."
 Still was I downward bent when suddenly 31
 my Master touched my side, and said, " Speak now,
 yourself, he is of Latian family."
 Then I, alert an answer prompt to show, 34
 began to speak to him without delay,
 " o spirit, you who are concealed below,—

INFERNO

Romagna never was, nor is, to-day, 37
 free from her tyrants' strife, but, openly,
 no war was raging when I came away.

Ravenna, as for many years gone by, 40
 stands, and Polenta's eagle broods o'er it,
 closed by his covering wings does Cervia lie :

They who to such long proof had to submit, 43
 who piled the French into a bloody heap,
 now feel upon them the Green Clutches knit.

Old and young mastiffs of Verruchio keep 46
 their cruel fangs (even they who formerly
 misruled Montagna) still implanted deep.

Lamone's city and Santerno lie 49
 beneath the Lioncel of the White Lair,
 who changes with the seasons constantly.

That town round which the floods of Savio fare 52
 lives, as between the hills and plains it lies,
 freedom and tyranny by turns to share.

Now tell me who you are, I pray, nor guise 55
 more hard assume than mine has been to you :
 so may your name be read of all men's eyes."

The flame awhile, as it was wont to do, 58
 roared, then its point deflected here and there,
 vibrated, and at length these words came through.

" Did I suppose you could my language bear, 61
 thus spoken to you, back to the world beyond,
 no more my flame would tremble in the air :

But since none, ever, living, broke the bond 64
 of this deep dungeon, if I hear aright,
 I, without fear of shame to you respond.

A man of arms was I, and then, contrite, 67
 I wore the monkish cord, believing so
 to have been pardoned,—truly, so I might,—

But for the Mighty Priest (his end be woe !), 70
 who threw me back into my former sin :
 wherefore, and how, I fain would let you know.

When in the bones and pulp whence lives begin, 73
 my mother bore me, Lion I was not
 in act, but to the sneaking fox akin.

INFERNO

- I knew all wiles and hidden ways, and wrought 76
 so skilfully therein that my renown
 to listening ears o'er all the world was brought.
- When to that time of living I had grown 79
 when men begin the ropes of life to slack !
 and its full hoisted mainsail to draw down,
- Then what had once rejoiced me in life's track 82
 now pained me. Penitent and meek I stood
 and that confession might have served, alack !
- The Prince of the new Pharisees, with blood 85
 and war, encountering, near the Lateran,
 no Paynim enemy nor Jewish brood,
- But foes of whom each was a Christian,— 88
 for none of these men Acre had assailed
 or trafficked in the lands of the Soldan,—
- Thinking not on his highest Office, failed 91
 to reverence Holy Orders or my cord
 that to make lean its wearers has availed.
- But once, as Constantine Sylvester's word 94
 sought at Soracte, for his leprosy,
 he called on me my healing to afford
- For his pride's feverish intensity. 97
 such was his prayer : I spoke no word at all :
 his speaking like a drunkard's seemed to be.
- Then said he, ' Let no doubt your heart enthrall, 100
 for I absolve you now. Teach me, I pray,
 how best to compass Penestrino's fall.
- Heaven's portals I can shut, or open lay, 103
 as you know well, for double are the Keys
 to which my forerunner small heed would pay.'
- Then, as I pondered over words like these, 106
 speech of some kind seemed best, and I replied :
 ' father, since thus your absolution frees
- My soul from sin without the act implied, 109
 large promise followed by fulfilment small
 will make your lofty Chair be glorified.'
- Then, when I died, I heard Saint Francis call 112
 my soul, but one of the black Cherubim
 cried, ' Wrong me not, nor seize my destined thrall.

INFERNO

Down must he come among my slaves, and him, 115
since he gave forth this counsel fraudulent,
I hold thus by the hair with clutches grim.
No pardon frees him who does not repent : 118
repentance, with the evil wish there still,
stands contradictory in argument.'
Oh, miserable me ! how did I thrill 121
when seized by him who cried, ' Within your mind
you deemed I had not such logician's skill.'
He carried me to Minos, who entwined 124
his tail eight times about his rugged flank,
then bit it fiercely in his fury blind.
' One for the fire of thieves,' he cried. I sank, 127
and down to where you see me now was borne.
my soul mourns, marching in this flaming rank."
As thus he grieved in dolorous words forlorn, 130
the flame departed, moving through the air
the glowing radiance of its writhing horn.
Then went we on, my Guide and I, to where 133
upon the cliff, another arch is thrown
across the Pit where those rewarded are
With guilt by whom disputes and schisms are sown. 136

INFERNO CANTO XXVIII

Ah, who with amplest words could ever tell 1
 of all I saw of blood and agony
 here gathered in the black abyss of Hell ?
 Each tongue would fail, for our poor speech would be 4
 o'erburdened to describe the horror there
 which lies beyond our mind's capacity.
 If all the crowded tribes that gathered were 7
 in Puglia's fated field, whose mourning cries
 echoed the wail of bloodshed and despair,
 Beneath the Romans, the long tragedies 10
 of war that left such store of rings behind,
 as Livy tells in his true histories ;
 With these down battered they who set their mind 13
 to fight with Robert Guiscard, yea, and they
 whose scattered bones men, gathering, still may find
 At Ceperano, where, in false array 16
 the Apulians fought, at Tagliacozzo, too,
 where old, unarmed Alardo won the fray,—
 One's head shown severed, and one's limbs pierced
 through,—
 were gathered, 'twould not match the horrid sight 20
 that terrible Ninth Chasm brought to view.
 No cask, robbed of the staves that keep it tight, 22
 yawns wider than that one I saw split down
 from chin to where the lower limbs unite.
 Between his legs his entrails all were shown, 25
 the liver and the vessels that contain
 the lately eaten food corrupted grown.
 Then, when I gazed intently on his pain, 28
 he looked at me and all his breast laid bare,
 crying, " See how I tear myself again.
 See how Mahomet has been butchered. There, 31
 before me Ali goes, from chest to chin
 his face is cleft : he weeps in his despair.
 All others whom you see this place within, 34
 of Scandal and of Schism have sowers been
 and bear the punishment of their foul sin.

INFERNO

A Devil stands behind with weapon keen 37
 to cleave and quarter all in this abode,
 again their wretched members shearing clean,
 When we have wandered round this weary road : 40
 for as we go our bitter wounds are healed
 ere back to him the Circle we have trod.
 But who are you, who that high rock have scaled, 43
 and sit there, musing, thinking to delay
 the doom upon your accusations sealed ? ”
 “ Death holds him not, nor guilt, upon this way,” 46
 my Master said, “ conducts to torment due
 but for experience full, I him convey,—
 I who am dead,—sent here to lead him through, 49
 Circle by Circle, all the Rings of Hell,
 true is the tale as that I speak to you.”
 More than a hundred heard as his words fell, 52
 and gathered in the Pit to gaze on me,
 losing their pain a moment by the spell.
 “ Say, then, to Fra Dolcino, if it be 55
 that you may soon behold the sun, if, here,
 he would not follow my steps speedily,
 That he must arm himself with food and gear 58
 lest snow assist the Novarese array :
 for conquest otherwise would cost them dear.”
 Mahomet spoke, pausing these words to say 61
 with one foot lifted upwards, then he placed
 its sole upon the ground and moved away.
 Another with pierced throat who was defaced 64
 by wounds that sliced his nose even to the eyes,
 on whom could but a single ear be traced,
 Standing among the crowd in mute surprise, 67
 before the others, opening his slit throat
 that seemed all glowing with vermilion dyes,
 Cried, “ You whom guilt brings not to this sad spot, 70
 whom once, in Latian lands, I came to know,
 if likeness too complete deceive me not,—
 Pier da Medicina,—as you go 73
 yonder, recall me on the plain that falls
 from high Vercelli down to Marcabō.

INFERNO

And tell two good men within Fano's walls, 76
 Guido and Angiolello, too, unless
 some other power our prescience here forestalls,
 They in their ships shall meet with dire distress, 79
 cast forth and drowned near La Cattolica,
 by a fell tyrant's treacherous wickedness.
 Never from Cyprus to Majorca saw 82
 Neptune a crime so great, not even in bands
 of cruel Greeks or pirates without law.
 The one-eyed traitor, who has seized the lands 85
 that one, who here goes with me, fervently
 wishes had never come into his hands,
 Will bid them to a parley. Then will he 88
 so ill contrive that they will need no prayer
 or vow to find Focara's wind blow free."
 Then I to him, "O do you then declare, 91
 if you would have me bear your tale above,
 who is he who this sight so ill can bear?"
 Then with his hand outstretched, the spirit strove 94
 the jaw of his companion to undo,
 saying, "This one is dumb. He could remove
 The doubt that troubled Caesar and renew 97
 his strength, by saying, 'To the man prepared
 loss from delay is certain to accrue.'"
 How humble, then, and terribly impaired, 100
 with tongue within his jawssplit through and through,
 seemed Curio, who so fierce a speech had dared.
 Then both his handless arms one raised to show 103
 his agony, as blood out-poured his face
 to stain in that dim misery below.
 He cried, "Your memory, too, will hold some trace 106
 of Mosca, whose 'Once done is ended,' brought
 such evil seed unto the Tuscan race."
 "And death to all your tribe," I added, fraught 109
 by this with agony on agony:
 he moved away o'erburdened and distraught.
 But still I stood to watch that company, 112
 and what I then beheld I scarce can dare
 to speak alone,—no other proof have I.—

INFERNO

But Conscience bears me on, Companion fair, 115
 who helps our hearts beneath the breast-plate set,
 steeled with the sense that purity is there.
 In truth I saw,—I seem to see it yet,— 118
 a headless body walking them among
 who in that mournful company had met.
 Its severed head it like a lantern swung 121
 holding it by the hair. It looked at us,
 and then it wailed "Oh me," with quivering tongue.
 Thus of itself its life shone out, and thus 124
 were two in one and one in two, how so,
 he knows alone whose laws are marvellous.
 When near the bridge's ending, from below 127
 it held aloft its arm, carrying the head
 that nearer to our ears its speech might flow.
 Thus, "Now you see how I am punishèd. 130
 oh you who breathing come, say if you find
 a horror worse than this among the dead?
 And, since you bear my tale to human kind, 133
 say who I am, 'Bertrand de Born, whose words
 gave evil counsels to the young King's mind.
 Father and son I made to draw their swords. 136
 and thus Ahithophel's malevolence
 towards Absalom and David well accords
 With mine, for, as a total severance 139
 was wrought between these, so my brain I bear
 cut from my trunk, the source of life and sense.
 Thus a like woe retributive I share." 142

INFERNO CANTO XXIX

This crowd, with all their diverse wounds displayed 1
 had made my eyes so drunken with their woe
 that they to weep their fill would fain have stayed.
 But Virgil said, "What do you wish to know, 4
 peering there, downwards, through the dolorous haze
 that shrouds these mutilated shades below ?
 Not thus on other Circles has your gaze 7
 been fixed. For two and twenty miles around,
 this valley may your tearful eyes amaze.
 Already has the Moon gone underground, 10
 and our allotted time is short, and yet
 many things are there to be seen and found."
 "Did you but note," I answered, "what has set 13
 my eyes intent below, to linger here
 still for a while I might allowance get."
 My Guide moved onwards, and I still kept near, 16
 continuing my answer as I went :
 "when my sad eyes explored this Cavern drear
 It seemed that in its shadow there was pent 19
 one of my kin, who, here, with sorrow great
 mourns for the guilt that brings such punishment."
 Then said my Master, "On his woeful state 22
 let not your thoughts be fixed henceforth : attend
 to other things, and leave him to his fate.
 I saw him point at you from the bridge-end 25
 and with his finger threaten as he spoke :
 Geri del Bello did they name your friend.
 Then were you so intent with downward look 28
 on him who, long since, Altaforte swayed,
 that he, unnoticed, from the concourse broke."
 "My Guide," I cried, "the violent end he made, 31
 not yet avenged by any one of those
 on whom the shadow of his sin was laid,
 Has made him angry : hence it is he goes 34
 apart, nor speaks to me : and for that cause,
 for his disgrace, my heart more pity knows."

INFERNO

Thus spoke we, clambering, until a pause 37
 we made at the first rock from which below,
 but for the gloom, this pit uncovered was.

Then, when beneath our feet began to show 40
 the last of Malebolge's depths and they
 who all about it as lay-brethren go,
 Pierced were we with the wailings of dismay, 43
 that seemed like arrows barbed with pitifulness,
 making me on my ears my fingers lay.

Such pain,—as in the summer heat's distress 46
 crowds Valdichiana's lazar-house, or fills
 Maremma or Sardinia no less,

Was huddled in one ditch of festering ills, 49
 and from it rose a stench as sickening
 as that which oft from putrid limbs distils.

Downwards we went, still leftwards journeying 52
 by the last margin of the rocky height,
 and then I felt my eyesight brightening

To pierce the dark where Justice waits with might 55
 infallible, on the Great Father's power,
 false traitors, here, to number and requite.

No sadder was it in that dolorous hour, 58
 when sick to death Ægina's people lay,
 and so the air, plague-stricken, seemed to lower

That beasts, even slender worms, fell by the way 61
 and died : and afterwards, the ancient race
 came to a dreadful end, as poets say,

Restored by spawn of ants, than 'twas to trace 64
 now gathered into heaps, and dimly seen,
 the shades who seemed their languid limbs to enlace.

One on another's belly seemed to lean, 67
 or on his shoulders, while some, wearily,
 crawled on all-fours along that drear ravine.

We followed step by step, and silently, 70
 listening attentively and watching those
 who could not raise themselves as we went by.

I saw two, leaned together to increase 73
 their mutual heat, as we place pot to pot,
 covered with loathsome scabs of foul disease.

INFERNO

Ne'er have I seen a curry-comb so hot 76
 in action by a stable-boy whose lord
 waits for him, who his bed would fain have sought,
 As each of these his own skin clawed and scored 79
 with his own nails, to ease the prurience
 to which nought else could such relief afford.
 So did their nails remove the scab from thence 82
 as does a knife strip off the scales of bream
 or fish that bears them larger or more dense.
 To one my Guide said, "You whose fingers seem 85
 to tear away your horrid coat of mail
 and sometimes like a pair of pincers gleam,
 Tell us if any shade within this pale 88
 be of the Latin race: so may your claws
 in this your work eternally prevail."
 "We are both Latins," one replied, in pause 91
 of weeping, "whom you see disfigured so:
 but who is he who asks me what I was?"
 My Guide replied, "From ledge to ledge I go 94
 leading this living soul to whom I mean
 the deepest agonies of Hell to show."
 Then each upon the other ceased to lean 97
 and, trembling, turned to me, and others, too,
 who heard our words echoed these cliffs between.
 My Master good upon me turned his view 100
 wholly and said, "Speak to them as you will."
 so urged, my speech I hastened to renew:
 "So may, above, your memories linger still 103
 unfaded in the world that is man's home
 while many suns their yearly round fulfil,
 Who are you?—say. From what race do you come?
 and let not your disgusting punishment 107
 silence you with its horrid masterdom."
 "An Aretine, I to the stake was sent 106
 by Albergo da Siena," one replied,
 "though not for that offence am I here pent.
 'Tis true that once in joke to him I cried, 112
 'see, I can raise myself into the sky:'
 with great desire and little wit supplied,

INFERNO

- He wished that I should teach him how to fly. 115
 and as I could not make him Daedalus,
 he made his father will that I should die.
- But Minos to this Tenth Pit dolorous, 118
 for practising on earth my alchemy,
 sent me, unerring in his doom on us."
- Then said I to the Poet, "Can there be 121
 a vainer race than these Sienese are,
 on all the earth?—not Frenchmen, certainly."
- On that, the other leprous one, aware 124
 of what was said, replied, "Stricca, alone
 excepted, who so sparsely spent his share,
- And Niccolo, who was the earliest one 127
 to find the costliest use of cloves, inside
 that garden where such precious seeds are grown.
- Except, too, those with whom in squandering vied 130
 Caccia of Asolano, selling trees
 and vines, while Abbagliato wit supplied.
- That you may know against the Sienese 133
 who seconds you, now turn your eyes on me
 so that my face may you from doubt release,
- Seeing in me Capocchio's shadowy shape 136
 who made base coin by alchemist's deceit
 you will, I think, recall me as the ape
- Of nature, in his perfidy complete." 139

INFERNO CANTO XXX

What time great Juno deeply was enraged 1
 at Theban Semele and all her race,
 a feud which, more than once, that goddess waged,
 Athamas grew so mad with his disgrace, 4
 that, seeing how his wife her two sons led,
 each taking, close on either side, his place,
 He cried, "Come, quickly: let the nets be spread, 7
 for I this lioness and her whelps will seize
 within the pass." His claws he lengthenèd,
 And fastening on Learchus, one of these, 10
 he whirled him round and dashed him on a stone:
 she, with the other drowning, found release.
 And when the Trojans' fate so low had grown 13
 that they, who ventured all things, came to see
 their Kingdom vanished, and their King o'erthrown,
 Sad Hecuba, in her captivity, 16
 when she had seen the dead Polyxena
 and Polydorus laid by the lone sea,
 Out of her mind with grief at what she saw, 19
 barked like a dog, so powerfully her woe
 twisted and wrung her mind from reason's law.
 Never did Furies, Theban or Trojan, show 22
 such cruelty in wounding beast or limb
 of human body with a stinging blow
 As I saw in two shades, naked and dim, 25
 who, biting, ran, like to a hungry boar
 when some one from the sty has driven him.
 One fastened on Capocchio's neck and tore 28
 his flesh, and all along the valley's bed,
 scraping his belly, him it onward bore.
 Then said the Aretine who shook with dread, 31
 "That sprite is Gianni Schicchi,—mad is he,—
 and thus his fellows here has torn and bled."
 "Oh," cried I, "that this other I may not see 34
 fastening its tusks on you, tell me its name
 I pray you, ere from out this place it flee."

INFERNO

He said, "That other is an antique Dame, 37
 the wicked Myrrha, who, beyond the pale
 of virtuous love, brought on her father shame.
 She, that in this foul deed she might prevail, 40
 disguised herself in aspect false, as he,
 that other, who from hence, even now, turns tail,
 Strove that the 'Lady of the troop' might be 43
 his, and by taking Buoso's form and face,
 signed his last Will with mock validity."
 Then when these two mad souls passed on, apace, 46
 out of my sight, I turned my head to see
 these others, born of a like evil race.
 One did I note shaped like a lute, if he 49
 no lower than the groin were visible
 where forked the human form begins to be.
 A hanging dropsy seemed his paunch to fill 52
 so that with evil humours overblown,
 'twas with his face no more conformable,
 And made him like a hectic sufferer shown 55
 to hold his lips apart, one to his chin
 drawn downwards and the other upward thrown.
 "Oh, you, who free from punishment of sin, 58
 —why, I know not,—come by this dolorous way,"
 he said to us, "give ear, and knowledge win
 Of Master Adam's woe. Once on a day, 61
 alive, I had enough of earth's delights,
 now for a drop of water do I pray.
 The streams that down from Casentino's heights 64
 to Arno run with sweet lucidity
 that to their cool, soft flow the heart invites,
 Are ever in my mind, and agony 67
 their memory brings me more than this disease
 that wears the flesh from off my visage dry.
 Thus rigid Justice, searching, finds in these 70
 the very place that by my crime was dyed,
 by which my sighs in misery increase.
 That is Romena, where I falsified 73
 the coinage with the Baptist's image sealed,
 for which, on earth, within the fire I died.

INFERNO

Were Guido's vile soul here to me revealed 76
 or Alessandro's or his brother's shade,
 that sight for Branda's fount I would not yield.
 One is already here, if what is said 79
 by these mad ghosts be true. What matters it
 since here my limbs with hampering bonds are stayed ?
 Were I so lightly built that I could flit 82
 one inch within a hundred years, I would
 myself even now have striven to commit
 To the hard task of finding where he stood 85
 in this maimed crowd, although eleven miles,
 with half a mile of breadth its bounds include.
 Among these am I numbered by their wiles 88
 who led me on to stamp those florins base
 which, by three carats, false alloy defiles."
 Then said I, " Who are those, in wretched case 91
 who smoke, as does a hand in winter cold
 bathed, and close to your right have ta'en their place ?"
 " I found them," answered he, " within this fold 94
 when I, like rain, was shot down on its bank.
 they moved not, nor will move while time is told.
 One is the false Dame from whom Joseph shrank, 97
 one, Sinon, the false Greek of Troy, and they
 smoke ever thus, consumed with fever rank."
 Then one of them keen rage seemed to display 100
 to be obscurely named, and violently
 his blows on Adam's paunch began to lay,
 Which sounded like a drum's rigidity. 103
 then Master Adam struck him on the face
 with arm whose flesh was no less hard and dry :
 Saying to him, " Though I change not my place, 106
 which this my weighted body does prevent,
 I have an arm still fit for such a case."
 He answered, " When to the furnace you were sent 109
 you had it not so ready : but it wrought
 more strongly when on coining you were bent."
 Then said the dropsied one, " You err in nought 112
 so speaking, but your witness was less true
 then, when in Troy to counsel you were brought."

INF ERNO

- " If I spoke false, false coin was forged by you." 115
 cried Sinon, " For a small fault here am I :
 your's more than any other demon's due."
 " Think, perjurer, on the horse's perfidy." 118
 he of the swollen belly answered, " Long
 your torture be that all men know that lie."
 " Your torment be that thirst that cracks your tongue,"
 the Greek replied, " and all that water foul 122
 by which your paunch before your eyes is hung."
 The coiner answered, " Thus your ugly jowl, 124
 as is its wont, gapes wide with words ill said :
 I thirst, and humours fill my body's bowl :
 But you engulfed in heat, with aching head, 127
 with small persuasion and few words might be
 to lap the mirror of Narcissus led."
 As I stood still to watch their enmity 130
 my Master hailed me thus, " Your longer gaze
 will cause a quarrel between you and me."
 When thus I heard him speak in angry phrase, 133
 such shame I felt that even to this day,
 its memory does my very soul abase.
 As one who dreams aught to his own dismay, 136
 and, dreaming, wishes it a dream, and so
 desires what is as though 'twere far away,
 So I would have excused myself, although 139
 I could not speak : thus was my pardon won,
 though at the time, so much I did not know.
 " Less penitence would for greater fault atone," 142
 my Master said to me, " than yours. Let all
 sorrow or sadness from your heart be gone :
 Remember I am near, should it befall 145
 that in this journey Fortune should require
 that we meet men engaged in such a brawl.
 To wish to hear them is a base desire." 148

INFERNO CANTO XXXI

The tongue that thus had wounded me so sore 1
and made my cheeks flush with a sudden shame,
a medicine for my confusion bore.
Even as Achilles' lance—they tell the same 4
about his sire's—at first the cause of woe
and afterwards of health renewed became.
We turned our backs on that sad Vale below, 7
and by the barricade that rings it round,
in dumb companionship began to go.
Here, less than night and less than day we found, 10
so that my sight small way before me went :
but there I heard a mighty trumpet sound,
Beside which thunder would seem weak and spent. 13
my eager eyes against its course had gone
forward, and on one place alone were bent.
When Charles the Great saw in fell rout o'erthrown 16
his holy emprise, no more terribly
nor sadlier was the horn of Roland blown.
A little time I kept my head awry, 19
listening, then through the gloomy air there rose
dim towers. "What City, Master, are we nigh?"
I cried. He answered, "In this darkness close 22
too far you seek to penetrate, and so
things are not as your fancies may suppose.
As we proceed, anon, you well may know 25
by distant scenes our senses are misled.
come, spur you onwards, and more quickly go."
Then lovingly, he took my hand and said, 28
"before we travel further on this way,
that less of marvel may be witnessèd,
Know, these are Giants and not towers, and they 31
around this Pit are stationed. At its rim,
up to the navel sunken do they stay."
As when the mist disperses, and less dim 34
lifts, and our eyes reshape the former sight
veiled by the crowded clouds that round us swim,

INFerno

So, passing onward through the murky night and drawing near and nearer to the edge, my error ceased, but greater my affright.	37
For, as the circling battlements that hedge Montereggione are with towers crowned, so, all about, this Pit's surrounding ledge	40
Was turreted with Giants, ranged around, half sunk below, and fated to abide Jove's wrath when from the sky his thunders sound.	43
The face of one already I descried, his shoulders, half his belly and his head with his two arms hanging on either side.	46
Nature who now has discontinued the making of such creatures, has done right, taking from Mars servants so huge and dread.	49
If she repent not of the elephant's might or of the whale's, those who the matter scan will not her judgment or her wisdom slight.	52
For where the force of mind adds to the plan of evil will and power so terrible, there is no help within the scope of man.	55
His face in length and measure seemed to fill of that high pine-cone by Saint Peter's shrine at Rome :—his bones to this conformable.	58
So that the bank that did his waist confine and hid him, downwards, showed above as much that up to where his rough locks formed a line,	61
Three Frisians, one on other, would not touch. for thirty spans,—and large,—I saw below, where many a man secures his mantle's brooch.	64
"Rafel mai amech zabi almi,"—so, his fierce mouth shouted, for no gentler tone of speech or psalmody could from it flow.	67
My Guide addressed him, "Oh, you foolish one, take to your horn and fill it with your wind, when rage or other passionate fit comes on.	70
Feel at your neck, the cord you there will find that holds it bound, Oh, spirit all confused, and see its coils that your huge figure bind."	73

INFERNO

And then to me, "He has himself accused, 76
 for this is Nimrod, by whose evil thought
 one tongue is not o'er all the world diffused.
 Leave him alone, then, all our speech is nought, 79
 for every language is unknown to him
 as his by all the world has been forgot."
 So did we leave him, by the leftward rim 82
 until, a crossbow shot beyond, we found
 another Giant larger and more grim.
 I know not by whose power he had been bound, 85
 but his left hand before him was confined
 and to his back his right was twisted round
 Held by a chain which seemed his form to bind 88
 from the neck downwards. On his frame, above,
 in five successive circles, it was twined.
 "This arrogant spirit would have fought with Jove," 91
 my Guide explained, "and of that insolence
 the punishment he here is doomed to prove.
 Ephialtes is his name,—loud his pretence 94
 when Giants made the immortal gods afraid,
 and now his arms are bound in impotence."
 Then said I, "Fain my eyes would have surveyed 97
 unmeasured Briareus, if it might be
 his marvellous form were to my eyes displayed."
 He answered me, "Antaeus you will see, 100
 near by, unbound, and he who speaks will guide
 us to the last depth of iniquity.
 He whom you wish to see is far aside 103
 from where we are, and bears a fiercer look
 than this one and in equal bonds is tied."
 No earthquakes ever a high castle took 106
 with trembling shock more terrible than now
 the body huge of Ephialtes shook.
 More than before did death its shadow throw 109
 upon me, lacking only was the fear
 of what I knew his bonds would not allow.
 We travelled on, and in short space came near 112
 Antaeus, who for five ells counting not
 his head, above the Cavern's rim stood clear.

INFERNO

- "O you by whom, within the fateful spot 115
 that gave to Scipio heirship of renown
 when Hannibal his losing battle fought,
 A thousand lions quick were overthrown, 118
 and of whom, had you joined your brethren's war,
 it is believed the conflict would have gone
 In favour of Earth's sons,—descending far 121
 and boldly, place us down where, far below,
 Cocytus' waves in ice imprisoned are.
 Say not, 'To Tityos or to Typhon go,' 124
 this man may fill some part of your desire :
 therefore bow down, nor scornful aspect show.
 He can men's minds with praise of you inspire ; 127
 he lives and yet may hope for many days,
 if sooner Grace his soul do not require."
 Thus spoke my Guide. I saw Antaeus raise 130
 his hands and seize him with that mastery
 which even to Hercules had caused amaze.
 Then Virgil, feeling this, cried out to me, 133
 "come hither, that I take you too," and so
 we two, thus joined, one bundle seemed to be.
 As Carisenda's tower seems from below 136
 to one who watches while a cloud goes by,
 athwart it, and it downward seems to bow,
 So seemed Antaeus to my fearful eye 139
 that watched his bulk impending, and I fain
 some other pathway would have wished to try.
 Gently he lowered us to that domain 142
 which swallowed Lucifer and Judas,—there
 he paused not, nor did long inclined remain,
 But raised himself, like ship's mast, in the air. 145

INFERNO CANTO XXXII

- Could I but coarse and rugged rhymes repeat, 1
such as would suit the deep and dreadful Pit
in which these awful precipices meet,
It should my fancy strain to tell of it. 4
but fear restrains me, speaking, lest I may
for such a terrible task prove all unfit :
Nor can it well be drawn in jest or play, 7
this lowest Gulf of the whole Universe,
nor told by lips that 'mamma' and 'papa' say.
But may those Dames assist my humble verse 10
who helped Amphion with the Theban wall,
so that from fact the song be not diverse.
O wretched ones, of whom to speak at all, 13
or of your home, is hard, better had you
been born as goats or cattle of the stall.
When to the gloomy depths we nearer drew, 16
beneath the Giant's feet, and far below,
and while on the high wall my glance I threw,
I heard a voice cry, "Look to where you go, 19
lest your unheeding feet should strike the head
of some sad brother wearied with his woe."
Whereat I turned and saw a lake outspread 22
before me and beneath, that, bound with frost,
from water into glass was alterèd.
For never was the Austrian Danube crossed 25
with such a heavy veil, nor, far away
the cold Tanai in wintry silence lost,
As here, for if Tabernicch on it lay, 28
down-fallen, or Pietrapana crashed on it,
its edge would not have creaked or given way.
As in a marsh a croaking frog will sit 31
with mouth half covered, when, at evening,
dreams through the weary gleaner's slumber flit,
Up to where shame a rising blush may bring, 34
embedded in the ice, each livid shade
lay, and their teeth like storks' kept chattering.

INFERNO

Each face was downward turned as their mouths paid
 this tribute to the cold, and from their eyes 38
 the sorrow of their spirits was displayed.

I gazed around a while, and on the ice 40
 beneath I fixed my look, and at my feet
 saw two with hair entangled in strange wise.

"Tell me your names," I cried, "whose breasts so meet
 and press together." As I thus appealed, 44
 they turned their faces up my words to greet :

And as they did so, tears that, unrevealed 46
 till now, had gathered, welled about their sight,
 and instantly by frost were fast congealed.

No iron cramp e'er held two logs more tight 49
 than these were bound. Like goats in furious mood
 they butted each at each and tried to fight.

"Why, gazing down upon us have you stood 52
 so long?" cried one whose ears were lost through cold,
 his face still fixed within the frozen flood.

"If you will know who these two are, behold, 55
 they, sons of Albert, held that vale where through
 the waters of Bisenzio are rolled.

They issued from one body. Yet may you 58
 search Caina's utmost borders and not see
 any more fit for Fate herein to glue.

Not he whom Arthur slew for perfidy, 61
 nor yet Focaccia, nor this one here
 whose presence is so troublesome to me :

He blocks my vision with his head so near.— 64
 of Sassol Mascheroni, and his tale
 you, if a Tuscan, do not need to hear.

Know,—that it may not further speech entail,— 67
 I am Camicion de' Pazzi : yet
 Carlino may for my excuse avail."

A thousand faces there appeared hard-set, 70
 dog-like with cold : with horrid shuddering
 I cannot yet these frozen fords forget.

As we passed, towards the centre travelling, 73
 where all weights meet, I shivered as I went
 through where eternal shadows seemed to cling.

INFERNO

- Whether by chance, or fate, or free intent, 76
 I know not, now, my foot these heads among,
 struck one with an encounter violent.
- Weeping it cried, "Why do you do me wrong 79
 by trampling thus, if you have not come here
 vengeance for Montaperti to prolong?"
- Then I, "My Master, say, and let me hear 82
 an answer to my doubts of him who speaks,
 then to your urgent haste I will give ear."
- My Master paused, and I, while his hoarse shrieks 85
 still cursed me, said, "Who are you, then, whose tongue
 others to load with vile invective seeks?"
- "Nay, who are you?" he cried, "who come along 88
 through Antenora, striking thus my cheek
 with force that in the living were too strong?"
- "I am alive," I said, "if fame you seek 91
 it may advantage you if I your name
 conjoin with others when elsewhere I speak."
- "I would not so," he cried, "back whence you came, 94
 nor vex me more. To this black region led,
 ill do you try your flatteries to frame."
- Then did I seize him by his scalp, and said, 97
 "your name I still demand, or not one hair
 if you refuse shall stay upon your head."
- He answered me, "Though you shall lay me bare 100
 I will not tell my name nor answer make
 though thus my head a thousand times you tear."
- His coiled hair I had begun to take 103
 in hand, and tufts of it I had torn out,
 he, yelping, prone upon the frozen lake,
- When one cried, "Bocca, why do you thus shout, 106
 nor only chatter with your jaws? What now?
 that you bark thus? What devil is about?"
- "Now," cried I, "traitor vile, no more avow: 109
 I would not have you speak: but, to your shame,
 a true report of you all men shall know."
- "Off," cried he, "what of me you choose, proclaim, 112
 but if from hence you win, tell the true tale
 of him who is so ready to defame.

INFERNO

He mourns the Frenchman's silver. 'In that pale,' 115
 say you, 'where all the frozen sinners sit,
 congealed, I did the man of Duera hail :'
 And if they ask 'Who else,' do not omit 118
 to tell of that Beccaria, close by you
 whose false throat was by men of Florence slit.
 Gianni de' Soldanier lies yonder, too, 121
 with Ganellone and Tribaldello,—he
 Faenza, while it slumbered, did undo."
 When we had passed beyond him, I could see 124
 two frozen shades so close encountered,
 one's head the other's cap appeared to be.
 And as one, fierce with hunger, chews at bread, 127
 the uppermost had deeply fixed his teeth
 deep in the other's skull where neck joins head.
 Thus, in his horrid rage, did Tydeus sheath 130
 his fangs in Menalippus' head, and gnaw
 his helpless skull and the soft parts beneath.
 "Oh, bestial one," I cried, when this I saw, 133
 "who show your rage towards him so horribly,
 tell me the cause,—that so, if there be law
 For your complaint,—knowing your history, 136
 and his offence, I may your cause maintain
 amid the upper world, if, happily,
 My tongue its power of speech shall still retain." 139

INFERNO CANTO XXXIII

From his foul feast the sinner raised his teeth, 1
cleaning them on the hair of that poor head
which he had thus so cruelly gnawed beneath.
And thus began, " You would that tale of dread 4
I should renew with which my heart is wrung
with grief or ever I a word have said :
Then, if my words like evil seed be flung, 7
springing into reproach of him I wound,
tears mingle with the loud wrath of my tongue.
I know not who you are, nor how this round 10
of misery you tread,—your words I know
breathing a Florentine and homely sound.
Count Ugolino was I, he below, 13
Archbishop Ruggieri,—I will tell
why such bad neighbourhood to him I show.
It needs not to relate how by his fell 16
contrivances, I, trusting in his faith,
was prisoner ta'en, and suffered death as well.
But you the cruel nature of my death 19
know not. I shall disclose it, and my fate
you well may judge by that which followeth.
Some moons had shed their light through the small grate
of what as ' Tower of Famine ' now is known, 23
where others, like to us, unfortunate
May yet within its prisoning ramparts groan, 25
when, in an evil sleep I dreamed, whereby
the veil that hid my fate was backwards thrown.
This one appeared, a Lord and Master high, 28
hunting the wolf and whelps on mountains steep
that hiding Lucca from the Pisans lie.
With hounds lean, keen and dexterous in their leap, 31
Gualandi and Sismondi, first in chase,
and with Lanfranchi joined, he tried to keep.
After short course methought that I could trace 34
in father and sons, a growing weariness,
whose sides the hounds' teeth cruelly did deface.

INFERNO

When morning came, I woke to woe no less, 37
 hearing my children weeping in their sleep,
 and crying out for food in hunger's stress.

You, too, are cruel if dry eyes you keep 40
 over the thought that on my spirit weighed :
 if you weep not,—when did you ever weep ?

Now they awoke. The moment long delayed, 43
 at which our food was given us, came, and each
 was from his dreams uncertain and afraid.

A terrible sound my ears began to reach,— 46
 the locking of that door. I looked on these,
 my children, with a grief too great for speech.

I wept not : turned to stone my faculties 49
 grew, and my little Anselm, weeping, cried,
 ' why look so, father ? Are you ill at ease ? '

But still I wept not nor to them replied 52
 for all that day, nor when the night came on,
 until the dawn o'er all the earth grew wide.

And as a little ray of light was thrown 55
 into that dolorous dungeon, lo ! I saw
 four faces with the horror of my own.

Then I began my very hands to gnaw 58
 in agony, when, rising from the floor,
 thinking that thus I would have filled my maw,
 ' Father,' they cried, ' less pain should we endure 61
 if you should feed on us whose bodies owe
 their life to you,—let them your life secure.'

To comfort them I calmed my terrible woe 64
 for that day, and the next, while dumb we lay,—
 hard earth, why did you not gape wide below ?

Then, in the dawning of the fourth sad day 67
 my Gaddo fell about my feet, and wailed,
 ' father, have you no help for our dismay ? '

On that, he died. As I am here unveiled 70
 to you, so saw I these three, one by one,
 sink, on the fifth and sixth day. Then sight failed,
 But still I groped about each murdered son, 73
 calling them by their names, already dead,—
 then hunger did what sorrow had not done."

INFERNO

As thus he ended, on that wretched head 76
 with squinting eyes he struck his vengeful teeth
 that, like a dog's, the bone encountered.

Oh, Pisa ! shame of the fair land whose breadth 79
 sounds in the gentle 'Si,'¹ if those who lie
 beside you are too slow to work your scathe,

Let, then, Capraia and Gorgona vie 82
 to pile a mole across the Arno's bed,
 till all your people shall by drowning die.

For though Count Ugolino, as 'tis said, 85
 betrayed for you your castles, for that deed,
 you need not thus his sons have tortured.

Oh, later Thebes ! their youth alone might plead 88
 for Uguccione and Brigata, those
 also, whose names here noted, one may read.

We wandered further where the frost grasped close 91
 and ruggedly, another race, not bent
 down, but o'turned in miserable pose.

Their very weeping brought impediment 94
 to weep, for, clustering about their eyes,
 inward, it turned to sorer punishment.

The first tear seemed at once to crystalize, 97
 and, growing, like a glassy visor, filled
 the hollow that beneath the eyebrow lies.

And here, though like a callus I was chilled 100
 so utterly, that every feeling fled
 my face, and all sensation became stilled,

Yet did I seem to feel a breeze, and said, 103
 " my Master, what is this strange, moving air ?
 is not all wind from this place banishèd ? "

Then he to me, " Soon shall we reach to where 106
 your eyes may witness and an answer make
 of that which moves thus through the atmosphere."

One wretched spirit from the crusted lake 109
 cried, " Cruel souls to whom it is ordained
 your place in this last haunt of woe to take,

O lift these veils that have my tears restrained 112
 that I may ease my full heart ere again
 they are in these dread frozen bonds constrained."

¹ Si is the Italian for 'yes.'

INFERNO

- Whereat I said, "If you release would gain 115
 tell me your name: then, if I help you not,
 may I beneath the deepest ice remain."
- "Frate Alberigo am I. My lot," 118
 the shade replied, "is fruit of evil growth
 as recompense to gather on this spot."
- "O," cried I then, "and are you dead in sooth?" 121
 he answered, "How my body yet may range
 the upper world, I know not, for in both
- The Ptolomei have the vantage strange 124
 to wander: for their souls may fall down here
 ere Atropos has doomed them to the change.
- And so that you more willingly may tear 127
 this mask of frozen tears from off my face,
 know that when any soul of them shall dare
- As I did, to betray, quick to its place 130
 within the body, lo, a Fiend will come
 to rule the rest of its allotted space.
- The soul falls, ruining hither to its home. 133
 it may be, yonder shade who winters here
 may still on earth in bodily presence roam.
- Him you must know, since late you here appear: 136
 Ser Branca d'Oria was his name, and he
 has thus been frozen in for many a year."
- "I do not think you speak the truth to me," 139
 I said, "for Branca d'Oria has not died,
 but eats and sleeps, and clothes himself as we."
- "To the Malebranche's ditch," the shade replied, 142
 "wherein the boiling pitch is ever spread,
 the soul of Michel Zanche had not hied,
- When this man left a devil in his stead 145
 within his body, and in that of one
 whose aid that treachery accomplished.
- Let your hand now relieve my eyesight gone." 148
 I would not aid him, for, in truth to me
 rudeness to him seemed but a courtesy done.
- Ah, Genoese, who, from morality 151
 are all estranged and full of foul disgrace,
 why are you not dispersed o'er land and sea?

INFERNO

For with this worst of all Romagna's race 154
 I found one of your blood whose spirit, here,
 is bathed in chill Cocytus, while his face
And form as living on the earth appear. 157

INFERNO CANTO XXXIV

“ ‘*Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni*’ 1
 towards us: now, therefore, look in front of you,”
 my Master said, “if aught of him you see.”
 As when, in brooding mist or the dim blue 4
 of midnight, suddenly, the wind-blown sail
 of some great mill, far off, comes into view,
 Such did I see before me, and the gale 7
 so stormed, I tried behind my Guide to pass,
 for, there, no other shelter did avail.
 Now, in this place (to write it here, alas, 10
 I tremble), all the shades were wholly drowned
 beneath the ice and showed like straws in glass.
 Some lay there, prostrate, some upright were found, 13
 head downwards, or else raised upon their feet,
 or, head to feet, bow-like, were bent around.
 When so far forward we had gone that meet 16
 my Master deemed it was that I should see
 that Creature, once in lovely form complete,
 My Guide moved sideways from in front of me, 19
 bade me to stop, and cried, “See, Dis is there,
 and here ’tis meet that you courageous be.”
 How chilled and hoarse I then became, oh, spare, 22
 reader, to ask:—I should not answer you,
 so vain were words that horror to declare.
 I did not die: nor was it wholly true 25
 that I remained alive: think, if you may,
 what was my dreadful state between these two.
 The Emperor of the Realm of Woe half way 28
 showed his great bulk above the ice, and I
 nearer in size to Giants’ stature lay
 Than they would reach his arm’s immensity: 31
 thus you may judge how huge the total mass,
 if this one part it may be measured by.
 If once he were as fair as now he was 34
 hideous, and war against his Maker led,
 through him all ills may well have come to pass.

INFERNO

How great a marvel now I witnessed. 37
 I saw that he three faces had, that one
 in front of him was as vermillion red :
 The other two his shoulders seemed upon 40
 near to their middle part, and each one seemed
 to join about the summit of his head.
 That to the right 'twixt white and yellow gleamed, 43
 and dark the left as that of those who roam
 from where the waters of the Nile have streamed.
 And his great wings, such as might well become 46
 a bird so dreadful, issued underneath :
 no ship's sail ever spread so vast a dome.
 No feathers had they but like the dark sheath 49
 of bats' wings were they fashioned : as they beat,
 a wind came from them with a threefold breath.
 By these saw all Cocytus frozen : fleet 52
 from six eyes fell his tears three chins adown
 in bitter flood and bloody foam to meet.
 In each fell mouth there was a sinner shown 55
 chew'd as in flax-brake, those great jaws between :
 no respite to their punishment was known.
 To him in front, this biting seemed to have been 58
 as nothing to the tearing, for his spine
 at times laid bare of all its skin was seen.
 My Guide said, " He in torment most condign 61
 is Judas, the Iscariot : see, his head
 is inward, and his legs do twist and twine.
 Of those two others who are prisonèd 64
 head downwards, he who hangs from the black jowl
 is Brutus, silent though thus tortured :
 The other Cassius, a strong-limbed soul. 67
 but, see, the night is rising once again,
 and we must go, for we have seen the whole."
 Then as he wished, I made my arms a chain 70
 about his neck, and as the wings spread wide,
 he seized the chance a passage to obtain.
 He to those shaggy sides his grasp applied 73
 and scrambled down from tuft to tuft, 'mid hair
 tangled in frozen crusts on every side.

INFERNO

When we had reached the enormous hip-joint, where 76
the thigh revolves, my Master, suddenly,
and with both toil and painful labour, there
Turned so that where his feet seemed once to lie 79
his head was : still he mounted up amain
as though the approach of Hell again to try.
" Hold fast," he cried, exhausted with the strain, 82
" for by such stairs as these we must ascend
from out this awful pit of sin and pain."
Then came we through a cleft that seemed to trend 85
upwards, and on its ledge he bade me stay,
trying towards me his wary feet to bend.
My eyes towards Lucifer began to stray, 88
and there I saw him, not as he had been,
but with his huge legs turned the upward way.
That I was sore perplexed by this, I ween 91
many of ignorant mind will understand,
not knowing well the point that lay between.
" Rise to your feet," my Master gave command, 94
" the way is long and difficult, and the hour
of the Sun's middle tierce is close at hand."
It was not like a palace-hall, or bower, 97
that place, but as a natural dungeon is,
there was no light upon its rocky floor.
" Before I leave this terrible abyss," 100
cried I, on standing up, " O Master, say
some words, lest I its fullest meaning miss.
Where is the ice ? Why does he stand this way 103
reversed ? Why does the time so short appear
in which the sun has turned from eve to day ? "
Then he to me, " Doubtless you deem that here 106
you still are where I caught upon the hair
of this foul Worm that pierces through this sphere.
As long as I descended, you were there, 109
but, when I turned, you passed the point whereto
the gravities from every quarter bear.
Now are you in that hemisphere below 112
opposed to that which the dry lands are in,
where He His death was doomed to undergo

INFERNO

Whose birth and life alike were free from sin. 115
your feet are now upon a little sphere
where the Judecca's other sides begin.
Here it is dawn while it is evening there : 118
and that great Fiend, fixed as he was before
remains, whose tangled locks have formed our stair.
Here, he his course from heaven downward bore 121
and all the land in terror of his fall
with Ocean's tide was veiled and covered o'er,
And came within our hemisphere. While all 124
thus fled, this piece of earth may have been raised
escaping from the crash catastrophal."
Down there,—its opening no further placed 127
than stretch the boundaries of Beelzebub's tomb,—
a cleft there is, by sound, not seeing traced.
A rivulet there has worn its narrow room 130
within the hollow rock, and slowly flows
downward, with tortuous trickling, in the gloom.
My Guide and I passed into that dark close, 133
returning to the world of light again :
and, without thought of pausing or repose,
We mounted up, I following him, till, through 136
a rounded opening in the rocky scars,
the beauteous face of heaven burst on our view,
And we came forth, again to see the stars. 139

P U R G A T O R I O C A N T O I

And now to fare forth over calmer seas 1
 the shallop of my genius hoists her sail,
 leaving behind her all such cruelties.
 And of that Second Kingdom is my tale 4
 where human souls are cleansed and purified,
 and rendered fit the heights of heaven to scale.
 Let Poetry, that had a moment died, 7
 o Sacred Muses Nine,—for yours am I,—
 revive, and let Calliope, my guide,
 Follow with singing of that melody 10
 at sound of which the wretched magpies knew
 for them the hope of pardon had passed by.
 The sweet sky with an eastern sapphire's blue, 13
 gathered and deepening in the air serene,
 and upward, the first heavenly Cycle through,
 Had given again my eyes their vision keen, 16
 delivered from the murk of death that late
 so heavy on my sight and heart had been.
 Venus, who makes the heart with love elate, 19
 rose, winning to her smile the Orient sky,
 veiling the Fishes that attend her state.
 I turned to right of me and looked on high 22
 to that new Pole, and Four Stars yet unseen
 save to the first of all humanity.
 Gladness they spread o'er all the heaven serene :— 25
 o widowed North that cannot know their light,
 bereft for ever of their glorious sheen !
 When from their splendour I had turned my sight 28
 towards the other Pole from whence had gone
 the Waggon, vanishing from out the night,
 I found an old man by my side, and one 31
 whose aspect might such reverence command
 as to his father pays a duteous son.
 His flowing beard and hair on either hand 34
 were mingled with the white of age, and spread
 amply upon his breast in double strand.

PURGATORIO

The Four Great Stars on him such brightness shed, 37
and lit his face with such fair radiance,
that 'He in sunshine stands,' I might have said.
"Who are you," then he cried, "who thus advance 40
from prison eternal, countering the dark flood?"
the grave plumes shook about his countenance.
"Who led you here? What lamp before you stood 43
to bring you forth from out the night profound
that ever in Hell's valleys seems to brood?
Are, then, the shackles of the Abyss unbound? 46
are heaven's counsels altered in such sense
that damnèd souls are in my grottoes found?"
My Guide then caught me, and with diligence 49
of word, and hand, and sign, made me to bend
my eyelids and my knees in reverence:
Then spoke to him, "My way I do not wend 52
hither by my own will. A Lady prayed
from heaven, that I should succour this her friend;
But since you wish our state should be displayed 55
and the true story of our coming told
my wish must be that yours be not gainsayed.
For this my friend the last hour has not tolled. 58
by folly, yet, he was so near it brought,
that scarcely could such issue be controlled.
So, summoned thus, I hurried to the spot 61
to rescue him:—there was no other way
than this, by which his safety might be wrought.
There have I taught him all the fell dismay 64
of wicked souls, and now we fain would see
those who, here, purge their sins beneath your sway.
'Twere long to tell how he was led by me. 67
virtue descended from on high to aid
and bring us hither to your company.
By you, then, be his coming welcome made, 70
for he seeks Liberty,—how dear that quest
they know who for that prize their lives have paid!
You know it, too,—for it you shed that vest 73
in Utica, whose radiance, at the Day
of Doom, will number you among the blest.

PURGATORIO

- The Eternal Laws we do not disobey. 76
 he lives, and Minos has no hold on me :
 for I am there where shines the gentle ray
- Of your own Marzia's eyes who fain would be 79
 for ever yours. Then, for the love of her,
 o sainted heart, give us your charity.
- Through your Seven Kingdoms, therefore, let us bear
 our course, and I will speak our thanks below, 83
 if you should deign even to be mentioned there."
- " Marzia so dear to me was, long ago, 85
 on earth while yet I stayed," he said, " that nought
 she asked of me but that I joyed to do.
- Now that beyond the Evil Stream her lot 88
 is fixed by laws made ere I came away
 from that dire realm, her wishes move me not.
- But if from heaven a Lady guides your way 91
 as you have said, no need for flattery,
 enough for me if in her name you pray.
- Go, then, and round his waist a smooth rush tie : 94
 then, after, do you lave his countenance,
 and cleanse it from its dark obscurity.
- For it beseems not that an eye, whose glance 97
 is dimmed with any mist, should here before
 a minister of those in heaven advance.
- This little Island, all around its shore, 100
 where beat the sea-waves, with a reedy bed
 growing upon soft mud is covered o'er.
- No other plant that would strong foliage spread, 103
 nor any harder in its fibre, here,
 counters the billows with unbended head.
- Do not return this way, for now, more clear 106
 the Sun is risen and will show the place
 at which the Mountain may less steep appear."
- This said, he vanished : and I rose apace 109
 silent, but drawing backward to my Guide,
 and fastening my eyes upon his face.
- He said, " My son, now follow me. Aside 112
 we now must turn, for here the sloping lea
 goes downward to its margin in the tide."

PURGATORIO

- The dawn had made the morning mist to flee 115
before its radiance, so that, far away,
I saw the glittering splendour of the sea.
- We passed along that lonely plain as they 118
who deem, ere their lost path they find anew,
their toil all vain till they have found the way.
- When we had come to where the morning dew 121
strove with the Sun, for slowly did it yield
in that place to the gentle breeze that blew,
- My Master laid both hands upon the field 124
gently outspreading them : in truth to me
his purpose in the act was not concealed.
- I raised my tear-stained cheeks to him and he 127
made clear their colour once again, spread o'er
with the dark stains of Hell's obscurity.
- Then came we down to that deserted shore 130
where never man, sailing, was seen to be
who had the power to return once more.
- Here, as the other wished, he girded me 133
and, suddenly, as from the earth he drew
that humble plant,—O marvellous to see !
- Another like it in its stead there grew. 136

PURGATORIO CANTO II

The Sun already on the horizon stood 1
while his meridian splendour shone upon
Jerusalem, at its highest altitude :
And Night, whose circle, countering his, had gone, 4
issued from out the Ganges, at her side
the Scales that from her shadowing hand are thrown.
Aurora's cheeks, that in the morning tide 7
in white and rose appeared, from where I stood,
now waned with age and were with orange dyed.
Now were we close upon the ocean's flood 10
pondering our path, like those whose souls go on
while their feet linger in incertitude.
When, lo ! as in the coming of the dawn 13
Mars rises ruddy through the gathering haze,
low, on the ocean's floor, a radiance shone
Out of the West, such that,—as may my gaze 16
again light on it !—I deemed no other flight
could pass more swiftly onward than its rays :
So that, when, for the nonce, I turned my sight 19
backward, my Guide to question, it had grown
larger, and its refulgence was more bright.
And there, on either side of it there shone 22
a marvellous whiteness, and, beneath it, grew
another of the like as it came on.
My Master spoke not, till within our view 25
these spotless glories seemed like wings to extend.
then, when, for certain, he the pilot knew,
He cried, " With folded hands now must you bend 28
kneeling :—it is an Angel of the Lord !
henceforth such Servants shall on us attend.
See how he scorns all human act and word. 31
no oar he plies, nor any other sail
from that far shore than what his wings afford.
See how towards heaven he raises in the gale 34
his plumes eternal winnowing the air
that fall not as the locks of man may fail."

P U R G A T O R I O

Then, nearer as the boat began to fare,	37
that Bird of heaven appeared in such a light	
the eye could scarce its blinding brilliance bear.	
Mine own I dropped, as, in a skiff so slight	40
that scarce the water swallowed aught of it,	
I saw him on the level shore alight.	
This heavenly pilot on whose form was writ	43
a blessed impress, steered, and in his view	
we saw more than a hundred spirits sit.	
They, all together, sang " <i>in exitu</i>	46
<i>Israel de Egypto</i> "—and each line	
written in all that psalm, they chanted through.	
Then, of the Holy Cross he made the sign,	49
and, while they threw themselves upon the shore,	
he went, as swift as he had crossed the brine.	
The crowd an unfamiliar aspect bore	52
looking about them, as of those who try	
new objects, and their semblance ponder o'er.	
On every hand the Sun's bold archery	55
shot forth the day, as he, with arrows bright	
chased Capricorn from out the central sky :	
And these new people towards us raised their sight,	58
crying, "If you may know it, tell us, pray,	
the pathway which will lead to yonder height."	
Then Virgil answered them : "To you it may	61
appear that we have knowledge of this place :	
but we, like you, are pilgrims on the way.	
We came, before you, but a little space,	64
from out another path so rough to scale	
that this ascent we as a pastime face."	
These souls to whom my breathing told the tale	67
of my still living state, observing me,	
marvelled exceedingly, and all grew pale.	
As round one with a branch of olive tree	70
the people crowd, eager to hear the news,	
none caring if another trampled be,	
So did these spirits on my aspect muse,	73
happy each one, as though they had forgot	
their chance of purifying here to use.	

PURGATORIO

One soul I saw come forward from that spot as if to embrace me, with such loving grace that to return his greeting was I brought.	76
O empty shades in all but form and face ! three times I clasped him in my arms, and they unfilled, upon my bosom took their place.	79
Wondering, I blushed, and as he drew away, he sweetly smiled, till, following him I went towards him, quick, my friendship to display.	82
Gently he bade me pause in my intent : then knew I who he was, and prayed that he to stay and speak with me might be content.	85
He answered, " As you once were dear to me in mortal flesh, so now I love you freed from thence, and stay. How come you here to be ? "	88
" O my Casella,—to return, indeed, to where I am, I journey. For what cause is so great loss of time to you decreed ? "	91
" No wrong is done," he said, " if he who draws whom he so wills and when, once and again this passage has denied me : and the laws Of Justice bind his will. Lo, he has ta'en	94
for these three months whatever spirits chose to come, not seeking any to restrain.	97
I, standing by the shore where Tiber flows mingling her waters with the wide salt sea, by him was kindly welcomed among those.	100
For winging to that river mouth has he hastened, where come together souls whose fate it is not by dark Acheron to be."	103
Then I, " If new commands do not abate your memory or use of loving song, that once was wont to sooth my amorous state,	106
Therewith now may it please you to prolong the solace of my spirit, that, confined in fleshly form, with weariness is wrung."	109
" <i>Love that holds parley with me in my mind,</i> " began he in such sweet response, that yet its dulcet memory remains behind.	112

PURGATORIO

- My Guide and I, and those whom we had met, 115
were all delighted with his song as though
on nothing else was our attention set :
- We were so charmèd, and entrancèd so, 118
by his sweet notes :—behold, the old man stood,
crying, “ What now ? ye laggard souls, and slow.
- Why all this careless lingering on the road ? 121
haste to the Mount. Put off the scales that hide
your spirit from the presence of your God.”
- As when wild doves on wheat or vetches, wide 124
gathering in flocks upon the fields, content
to dwell in peace without their wonted pride,
- Whene’er some cause of fright, incontinent, 127
appears, desert the place on which they feed,
fear moving them more than their first intent,
- So did my new companions run with speed 130
towards the steep, careless of that sweet lay,
like those who know not where their footsteps lead.
- Nor did we go less suddenly than they. 133

PURGATORIO CANTO III

Although their sudden flight had scatterèd 1
 that crowd about the plain, each with his face
 to the high mountain to which reason led,
 I kept beside my Guide,—without whose grace 4
 how should I have progressed ? and who but he
 could lead me upwards to that lofty place ?
 He seemed embittered by some misery 7
 of self-reproach. Oh, conscience high and pure,
 some trifle a sharp sting to you may be !
 Then, when his hasty pace did not endure,— 10
 haste ever mars our action's dignity,—
 my mind, as if some freedom to secure,
 From inward contemplation turned on high, 13
 and long I gazed upon that steep ascent
 that raised its mighty form against the sky.
 The Sun flamed red behind us as we went, 16
 and broken by my form, a shadow lay
 shaped like it, as it did his rays prevent.
 I turned aside, seized with a quick dismay, 19
 seeing that I alone this shadow threw,
 that I might be abandoned on the way.
 And then my Comfort, turning in my view, 22
 said : “ Why are you distrustful ? Do you dread
 that I am not here present, guiding you ?
 Already evening falls where there lies dead 25
 the bodily form whose shadow was my own,—
 from Brindisi to Naples was it led.
 If now by me there is no shadow thrown, 28
 marvel not more than at the spheres on high
 casting no shade when each on each has shone.
 To suffer heat and cold in misery 31
 bodies like ours that power has ordained
 into whose secret acts we may not pry.
 Mad is the man who thinks, however strained, 34
 our minds can reach to where, beyond our ken,
 one Substance in Three Persons is contained.

P U R G A T O R I O

- Be ye content with ' Why,' O race of men, 37
 for if to you all knowledge were displayed,
 useless the motherhood of Mary, then.
- So have you witnessed those on whom has preyed 40
 fruitless desire that, never satisfied,
 their never-ending punishment is made.
- Plato and Aristotle, and by their side, 43
 full many another do I think of thus ! "
 frowning he ceased as though by sorrow tried.
- Then the great Mountain rose close over us, 46
 its cliffs so steep that there our feet in vain
 might strive though ne'er so swift and dexterous.
- He, who from Lerici the way would gain 49
 to Turbia, through that wild and desert land,
 compared with this would find his roadway plain.
- " Who knows how it may slope on either hand ? " 52
 my Master said, and paused, " or where may he
 scale the steep heights who cannot wings command ? "
- Then, while he stooped the hidden path to see, 55
 searching its chances in his mind, and I
 gazed at the rock towering close over me,
- From our left hand appeared a company 58
 of shades who, towards us, came so slowly on
 they seemed not, though they moved, to come more
 nigh.
- " Master," I said, " look, yonder some come on 61
 who can their counsel give us, if it be
 that your own intellect affords us none."
- He gazed upon them, and then, cheerfully, 64
 replied, " Sweet son, let us towards them go,
 and let your hope be made a certainty."
- As yet, although a thousand steps or so 67
 we traversed, they were still apart from us
 as far as a good slinger's hand might throw.
- And all, about that cliff precipitous, 70
 they gathering pressed, and stood at gaze, as he
 who stops to scan some pathway dangerous.
- " Oh, happy shades, chosen for felicity," 73
 Virgil began, " by that same peace, wherein
 all of you hope eternally to be,

PURGATORIO

Tell us which way the mountain-slopes begin 76
 their rise, and if by us they can be scaled.
 to him who knows, lost time is double sin.”

Then, even as sheep in some close cote impaled, 79
 come out in ones, and twos, and threes, the rest
 standing with downcast face, as though they quailed,
 And what the first does, all do, closely pressed 82
 to the first leader when she stays her feet,
 knowing not why, in silliness confessed,

So saw I some come forth with us to meet 85
 who seemed the leaders of that happy band,
 their face and gait with modesty replete.

When these, then, noticed that, on my right hand 88
 a shadow lay of intercepted light
 that from me to the cliff seemed to expand,

They halted, and drew back as in affright, 91
 and all the others who behind came on,
 did likewise, knowing not the cause aright.

“Without your asking, I confess this one 94
 is human in his form, and that is why
 his substance stays the brilliance of the Sun.

But do not marvel. Trust that from on high 97
 ordered by heavenly power he goes along
 hoping to mount this steep acclivity.”

So spoke the Master, and that worthy throng 100
 cried, “Turn you, and, before us, enter there.”
 waving their hands their welcome to prolong.

Then one of them began to speak, “Whoe’er 103
 you be who comes, look on my face and say
 if e’er you knew me in the upper air.”

I turned, and let my gaze upon him stay. 106
 fair was his hair, his face of gentle mien,
 on one eyebrow a scar of wounding lay.

When, humbly, I denied that I had seen 109
 his face before, “Look there,” he cried to me,
 and showed his breast where a deep wound had been.

Then, smiling, “I am Manfred,” murmured he, 112
 “grandson of Constance who was Empress. You
 I pray that when again on earth you be,

PURGATORIO

- You will my daughter seek to speak with, who 115
of glorious Sicily and Aragon
is Mother, and will tell my story true,
Whate'er be said. When I had undergone 118
two mortal wounds, my soul, in tears, I gave
to Him from whose free grace is pardon won.
My crimes were horrible, but, keen to save, 121
the arms of Infinite Goodness reach so wide,
they gather in all who forgiveness crave.
If but the pastor of Cosenza, plied 124
by Clement with incitements to my doom,
had with the word of Sacred Writ complied,
Then every bone of mine had still found room 127
guarded beneath that weighty monument
by Benevento's bridge, that made my tomb.
Now are they rained on, and by tempests rent 130
outside my Kingdom, by the Verdè's stream
brought thither in the night with torches spent.
Their curse shall never keep us from the dream 133
of deathless love's return, while in man's heart
and mind hope's tender leaves still verdant seem.
True, those that from our Holy Church depart, 136
dying in contumacy, though contrite
must from this happy Mount remain apart.
Thirty-fold of the time they scorned the right, 139
presumptuous, must they spend so banishèd,
if kindly prayers make not their doom more light.
See, therefore, if you can some comfort shed 142
on me, by telling my good Constance how
you met me here, and of this sentence dread.
Much good can those above on us bestow." 145

PURGATORIO CANTO IV

When, on some feeling of delight or pain, 1
 that seizes one among our faculties,
 the soul its whole attention seems to strain,
 Giving no heed to what beyond it lies,— 4
 which seems to counter that unfounded thought
 that we, within us several souls comprise,—
 So, when before our ears or eyes is brought 7
 some thing to which the whole soul forcibly
 is drawn, time passes and we know it not.
 For that which notes this passing seems to be 10
 other than is the undivided soul :
 one is in fetters, and the other free.
 This did I know, hearing that shade unroll 13
 his history, and marvelling at his tale.
 fifty degrees the Sun had, towards his goal,
 By me unnoticed, climbed, when with glad hail 16
 these people all together seemed to speak :
 “ lo, here, you may begin the mount to scale.”
 A larger opening might some peasant seek 19
 to stop with gathered thorns, about his vine,
 when darker grows the cluster’s purpling cheek,
 Than was the gateway of that steep incline 22
 where-through my Guide, and I, behind him, went
 when all this crowd had left us. I opine
 One may at San Leo, or the descent 25
 towards Noli, or to Bismantova’s crest
 proceed with feet alone to his intent.
 Here, only clad with wings could I have pressed 28
 after my Leader,—plumes and wings I mean,
 of love for him, my hope and light confest.
 Within the broken rock we scrambled, keen, 31
 pressed close on either hand, and on the ground
 with foot and hand we climbed these walls between.
 Then, when the highest ridge of cliff we found, 34
 and there emerged upon an open lawn,
 “ master,” I cried, “ now whither are we bound ? ”

P U R G A T O R I O

He answered me, " Let not your foot be drawn 37
 downward, but up, behind me ever rise
 till some wise escort we may light upon."
 The mountain's crest so towered into the skies 40
 it conquered sight, steeper than a straight line
 drawn from half quadrant to the centre lies.
 Exhausted then, I cried, " Father benign, 43
 oh, turn about and see,—I shall be here
 abandoned, if you keep not pace with mine."
 " My son," he said, " there is a terrace near,— 46
 so far, still strive," showing where, on this side,
 circling the mountain, it began to appear.
 Then did his words so spur me that I hied, 49
 creeping behind him, upward, till, at last,
 I to this circling ledge my feet applied.
 There sat we down, and looked towards the East, 52
 whence we had come, as oft a traveller stays
 gladly reviewing all his labours past.
 First, on the shore beneath I fixed my gaze, 55
 then on the Sun, and wondered at his course
 as from the left he poured on us his rays.
 Well knew the learned Poet all the source 58
 of my surprise, to see the Car of Light
 drive to the North of us his blinding force.
 " If but the heavenly twins were in our sight," 61
 he said, " beside that Looking Glass displayed,
 which, high and low spreads out its radiance bright,
 Then would you see the Zodiac arrayed 64
 in all its splendour nearer to the Bears,
 unless it has from its old pathway strayed.
 If you would truly know how this appears, 67
 pondering within your mind, this vision see :—
 this mount and Zion, in different hemispheres,
 Upon the earth are placed opposingly 70
 with one horizon, wherefore the Sun's way,—
 the scene of Phaethon's fatal chariotry,—
 Must pass here, where we see it, while his ray 73
 shines upon Zion from the other side,—
 if your mind closely follows what I say."

PURGATORIO

"Surely, my Master," cried I, "since I tried these things to know, they never have been clear as now they are. My doubts are satisfied.	76
The middle circle of the heavenly sphere known as Equator in one science, stayed between the Sun and Winter of the year	79
For reasons which you give to me, is made northward to lie as far as Jews are wont to see it towards the warmer climes displayed.	82
But I would know how far up this steep front we still must travel, for, beyond my sight, above me now the precipices mount ! "	85
Then he to me, " So fashioned is this height that, though at first the path is hard and slow, he who wins upward finds his toil more light.	88
So, when at length your feet will seem to go easily forward, as a boatman glides who lets his skiff drift with the water's flow,	91
There is the end to which this pathway guides, and there you may your weary frame repose. this truth I know : I answer nought besides."	94
And as he said these words, a voice arose near us, " By chance, before that top is won he needs must rest who up this pathway goes."	97
On hearing this we turned, and there, upon the slope observed what we had passed unseen, to left of us, a mighty mass of stone.	100
Towards it we came, and saw some persons lean against it in the shade, as those who rest in laziness beneath some kindly screen.	103
And one of them who seemed with toil oppressed sat clasping both his knees, and with his head between them, hanging heavily depressed.	106
" O my sweet Lord, observe this one," I said, " who seems as lazily disposed as though among his sisters Sloth were numbered."	109
He turned to look upon our faces, slow raising his countenance above his thigh and said, " You who are valiant, upward go."	112

P U R G A T O R I O

I knew him then, and that acclivity, 115
 whose toil my breathing did somewhat impede,
 hindered me not accosting him. When I
 Came near to him, "Have you observed, indeed," 118
 he asked, scarce moving, "how the mighty Sun
 now on your left hand drives his fiery steed?"
 His mien of laziness, and brief, curt tone 121
 brought to my lips a passing smile. I said,
 "Belacqua, now my grief for you is gone :
 But tell me, why have you here lingerèd ? 124
 is it an escort that you wait, or nought
 detains you but your listlessness inbred?"
 "What use, my brother," said he, "to have wrought 127
 upwards, when at the Trials' Gate appears
 the Bird of God who bids me enter not?
 Ere that be must the heaven with all its spheres 130
 revolve as long as was my life's extent,
 for I delayed repentance all these years.
 Unless it be that ere that time is spent, 133
 some heart alive with grace, shall pray for me,—
 unheard to heaven a graceless prayer is sent."
 The Poet had gone on, and, eagerly, 136
 "the Sun on the meridian now sheds
 his light," he cried, "and Night's foot, shadowingly,
 From the far River to Morocco spreads." 139

PURGATORIO CANTO V

Already from these shades had I passed on, 1
 close following the footsteps of my Guide,
 when from behind, with pointing finger, one
 Cried out, "Look how the light on his left side 4
 who lower walks, shines not, and how this wight
 carries himself as one who has not died."
 Then at his spoken word I turned my sight 7
 on those who marvelled, gazing all at me,—
 at me alone,—and at the broken light.
 "Why should you let your mind entangled be," 10
 my Master said, "and why your pace abate?
 what matters what they murmur whisperingly?
 Come on behind me. Let these people prate. 13
 stand like a tower that does not stir its crest
 although it feel the storming tempest's weight.
 The man whose crowded thoughts within his breast 16
 follow each other, sees his goal recede:
 each one that rises undermines the rest."
 What could I answer but, "I come"? Indeed, 19
 I said so, while my cheek displayed the sign
 of rising blushes which for pardon plead.
 Meanwhile, in front of us, athwart the incline 22
 of that steep slope, there came a company
 who sang the '*Miserere*' line by line,
 Who, when they saw a shadow cast by me, 25
 for that my body broke the sunshine, stayed
 their song. And, "O," they muttered moaningly.
 Two, running, then as messengers conveyed 28
 to us their question, and an answer sought.
 "make us acquainted with your state," they said.
 To them my Master answered, "Tarry not, 31
 but tell your fellows, he who comes this way
 with me, of living flesh and blood is wrought.
 And if, as I imagine, their delay 34
 springs from his shadowing form, enough it is.
 him let them honour, them it may repay."

PURGATORIO

Never had the flaming stars across the abyss 37
 of gathering night in sudden splendour sped,
 nor through an August evening's clouds, I wis,
 But in less time departed those who fled 40
 upwards, then wheeled and faced us, like a band
 of horsemen all with bridles loosenèd.
 "They come," he said, "in numbers to demand 43
 your story, and entreat you. Onward go,
 and listen as you pass, but do not stand."
 "O soul," they cried, "who pass this region through 46
 towards bliss with limbs given to you at your birth,
 with us a moment let your step be slow.
 Look well, and say if any of us on earth 49
 you knew and may take back of him some news.
 why not stay here? What is your journey worth?
 All we have met our death by some misuse 52
 of force:—all sinners to our latest hour.
 then did the heavenly light our souls infuse.
 Contrite, and pardoning, on us the dower 55
 of God's own gracious mercy fell, and we
 seek him, enticed by love's commanding power."
 Then I, "I cannot, searching eagerly 58
 your faces, meet with one whom I have known.
 but if, O happy shades, 'tis given to me
 To please you, speak: and for that peace alone 61
 will I do this, which, following such a Guide,
 to find out I from world to world have gone."
 Then one began, "We all in you confide. 64
 no need for oaths if but the want of power
 fruition of the will has not denied.
 Wherefore, I now,—put forward at this hour 67
 for those around me, here,—would humbly pray
 if e'er you see the lands 'twixt Charles's dower
 And those held of Romagna, that you may 70
 in Fano graciously by prayers implore
 that I my heavy sins may purge away.
 Thence did I come. But the wounds deep and sore 73
 whence issued my existence with my blood,
 I from amid these Antenorians bore,

P U R G A T O R I O

Where I had hopes in safety to have stood. 76
 but he of Estè willed it, furiously
 passing beyond the bounds of rectitude.
 If towards La Mira I had fled when he 79
 surprised me at Oriaco, I had still
 shared in the breathing of humanity.
 I fled amid the marshy lands until 82
 the reeds and mire so choked me that I fell
 and from my veins saw a wide pool distil."
 Another said, "As longings that compel 85
 your climbing of this Mount are satisfied,
 let charity your aid towards me impel.
 I was of Montefeltro, far and wide 88
 known as Buoncontè: and no longer care
 Giovanna or the rest what may betide
 To me: so do I mourn." "What strange affair 91
 or violence," I said, "made you to stray
 from Campaldino? Was your burial there?
 None knows." "A stream runs," he began to say, 94
 "'neath Casentino: from that mountain chain
 the Archiano downward takes its way,
 Rising above the Hermitage. In pain 97
 with wounded throat, I fled to where its name
 is lost, leaving my blood tracks on the plain.
 Then vision failed me: and an end there came 100
 to all my speech on Mary's name. I fell,
 and nought was left there but my fleshly frame.
 Truth do I speak as you to men will tell. 103
 when God's own angel took me to his care,
 'why do you rob me thus?' cried one from Hell.
 'This man's eternal part away you bear 106
 for one small tear that severs him from me:
 yet for the other's doom I shall prepare.'
 You know how gathers the obscurity 109
 of cloudy vapour that in rain is thrown
 even as it rises where the cold airs be.
 Then he, whose evil will seeks ill alone, 112
 mixed cunning with it, and the mist and wind
 he stirred with powers of evil all his own.

PURGATORIO

- Hence all the valley, as the day declined, 115
from Pratomagno to the hills around
he wrapped in mist, the heavens lowered behind :
The air with water did he so confound, 118
it fell in rain and to the rills there sped
all that could not be taken by the ground.
And as it joined the larger streams that led 121
down to the royal river, each, oppressed
beyond control, ran ruining down its bed.
My frozen body, 'mid its wild unrest, 124
Archiano found, and to the Arno bore
loosing the cross that on my dying breast
My arms had made amid my anguish sore. 127
it rolled me by its banks and o'er its bed,
and with its ravaged spoils it hid me o'er."
"When you to yonder world again have sped, 130
and rested from the labours you have borne,"
a third one of these gathered spirits said,
"Think on La Pia who, in Siena born, 133
was in Maremma cruelly undone,
as he knows who, when first our troth was sworn,
His ring of gems my finger placed upon." 136

PURGATORIO CANTO VI

When they who play at dice rise from their game, 1
 the loser lingers long and sorrowfully,
 repeats his throws, discovering praise and blame,
 While towards the other all the company 4
 crowd. One before another plucks his gown,
 close by a third whispers, 'Remember me.'
 He does not stay nor is attention shown 7
 save when he gives his hand to some, and they
 depart. So, from the press he walks alone.
 So did I to the throng that round me lay, 10
 turning my face to this and the other side,
 winning by frequent promises my way.
 There was the Aretine, that one who died 13
 by Ghin del Tacco's fierce and murderous hand :
 another drowned whileas the chase he plied.
 Federigo Novello did expand 16
 his arms in prayer, and he, the Pisan, too
 the cause of good Marzucco's self-command.
 Count Orso there I saw, and one who through 19
 hatred and envy did his soul set free,
 who wrought no crime, they say, that any knew.
 Pier della Broccia do I mean : and she, 22
 the Lady of Brabant, while still alive,
 may well take heed lest a worse fate she see.
 As soon as flight from them I could contrive 25
 whose prayer was but that others for them pray
 so that their bliss may quicker arrive,
 I said, " You seem, oh, Light of all my way 28
 in one text to deny that human prayer
 can turn the doom of heaven aside. And they
 Ask but for this alone. Are hopes so fair 31
 fruitless, or is it that I do not see
 in these your words the meaning that is there ? "
 He said, " My words in plain simplicity 34
 are written, and these hopes are not in vain
 if you read wisely what was writ by me.

P U R G A T O R I O

The lofty heights of judgment feel no strain 37
 though love's own warmth the just desire fulfil
 of all the shades who in this place remain.
 But where this truth I laboured to instil, 40
 no prayer the evil done could mitigate,
 dissevered wholly from th' Almighty's will.
 But truly, rest not, nor your doubts abate 43
 till she shall speak, who will with truthfulness
 your eager intellect illuminate.
 I know not if my meaning you may guess,— 46
 I speak of Beatrice, whom you shall see
 there, on this summit, smiling in happiness."
 Then I, " My Lord, more active let us be, 49
 already am I less fatigued, and, lo,
 a shadow falls beneath the acclivity."
 " Following the daylight we shall onward go," 52
 he said, " as far as may be, but your thought
 errs from the truth of fact. It is not so :
 For, ere you upwards win to that sweet spot, 55
 him you will see return whose rays this height
 hides, so that you their downward course break not.
 But see, there comes a solitary wight 58
 whose eyes regard us, he may tell us where
 the quickest pathway lies,—to left or right."
 We then approached that shade. Ah, what an air 61
 of haughtiness, O Lombard soul, you showed
 moving your eyes with slow majestic stare !
 Nought said he to us as we onward strode 64
 towards him, but fixed upon us silently
 his eyes that like a couching lion's glowed.
 Yet Virgil drew to him and asked that he 67
 should show to us the way that we should go.
 he answered not that prayer immediately,
 But of our lives and country sought to know. 70
 when " Mantua " . . . my gentle Guide began,
 that shade who seemed so wrapped in his own woe
 Sprang towards him crying out, " O Mantuan, 73
 I am Sordello of your land," whereon
 each of them to embrace the other ran.

PURGATORIO

O servile Italy, grief's hostel, blown like helmless ship about, no Mistress, you, of provinces, but as a brothel known !	76
This gentle spirit thus so quickly flew to greet his fellow only at the sound that wakened memories of the home he knew.	79
And now, alas, your citizens are found at war against each other, even those with one fosse and one rampart ringed around.	82
Search, miserable one, where ocean flows around your coasts and shores, and your own breast try, if it any peace or comfort knows.	85
What boots it that Justinian has repressed your broken bridle, if the saddle stays unfilled ? A deeper shame is thus confessed.	88
Oh you, who, all obedient in your ways, should let that saddle be by Caesar filled, if you but knew what God's own word conveys,	91
How fierce the beast has grown and evil-willed without the chastening of the spurs, while you clutch at the bridle with your hand unskilled.	94
Oh, Teuton Albert, from your labours due resiling, see her wild and savage grown for that you guide her not with mastery true.	97
Let judgment just from all the stars be thrown upon your blood, so that on all your race shame may be heaped wherever this be known.	100
You and your father merit this disgrace for that the Empire's garden you have given to ruin : far retired in avarice base.	103
The Montagues and Capulets have striven, Monaldi, Filippeschi, look how they, regardless one, to grief and fear are driven.	106
Come, cruel one, and these your nobles sway, succour, redress their many wrongs, and see Santafiore's peacefulness to-day.	109
Come too and see how Rome so mournfully, alone and widowed, cries both day and night, ' Caesar, my own, why thus abandon me ? '	112

P U R G A T O R I O

- Come, too, and see the torch of love alight 115
among your peoples, and if pity ne'er
will move you, come, even in your shame's despite.
- O highest Jove, if you allow my prayer, 118
Thou who wast crucified on earth for us,
why is Thy just regard turned elsewhere ?
- Is it that in the deep and marvellous 121
abyss of counsel Thou dost yet prepare
some greater end, hidden, yet gracious ?
- For all the towns of Italy now share 124
the glut of tyrants, each intriguing boor
is treated as a new Marcellus there.
- My Florence, you at least may well be sure 127
this outburst does not touch you, thanks be paid
to those wise counsellings that still endure.
- Many just souls are there, although delayed 130
the arrow be in fitting to the string,
yet in the popular speech is right declared.
- Many there be that back the burden fling 133
of common duty, yet, without request,
your people say, ' We serve, unmurmuring.'
- Now be you glad for you have borne the test, 136
rich, peaceful, and enlightened. That I speak
truly, your deeds already have expressed.
- Athens and Lacedemon, where the Greek 139
in ancient law and civil art attained
so far, but shadowed the fair life you seek
- To show the world : for you by skill have gained 142
that scarce to mid November lasts the thread
that you had spun before October waned.
- How oft in times now well rememberèd 145
your laws, coin, offices and customs changed,
how quickly were your members alterèd !
- You, if you ponder it, will with her be ranged 148
who, lying in sore sickness, tries to ease
by turning on her pillow, oft deranged,
- The constant agony of her disease. 151

PURGATORIO CANTO VII

After a happy greeting, grave and sweet, 1
 three or four times renewed, Sordello stayed,
 asking, "Who are you then whom thus I meet?"
 "Ere to this mount such numbers were conveyed 4
 of spirits worthy with their God to be,
 Octavian in the tomb my bones had laid.
 For I am Virgil. No iniquity, 7
 but only faith unknown shuts me from heaven."
 such was my Guide's reply to him, and he,—
 As one who sees some marvellous thing, and, riven 10
 with doubtings, half believes and half denies:
 to say "It is," and then, "It is not," driven,—
 Seemed: then with reverent lowering of the eyes 13
 towards the Poet he turned, and once again
 approaching, clasped his knees in humble guise.
 "Oh, glory of the Latins whose rich strain 16
 of verse our speech's power has shown, through whom
 our country's fame eternal will remain,
 Favour or grace from you may I assume? 19
 if worthy of your speech, oh, let me know
 if you from Hell have come, or from what doom?"
 "From all the Circles of the realm of woe," 22
 Virgil replied, "I come. Grace from on high
 has led me and surrounds me as I go.
 For no deed, but for lack of it, have I 25
 the vision of the Sun you worship lost:
 too late for me was His Nativity.
 There is a place there, by no tempests tossed 28
 to agony, but where, instead of wails,
 the sighs are heard of many a hopeless ghost.
 There am I, and within its shadowy pales 31
 are innocent babes, for whose release from sin
 clutched by Death's teeth, no baptism avails.
 With those am I who clothed have not been 34
 by the three holy Graces, but have shown
 all other virtues of our human kin.

P U R G A T O R I O

- But if you know and can to us make known 37
the road, O point to us the path whereby
to Purgatory true the shades have gone.”
- “No place,” he answered, “is assigned, and I 40
wander above and round about. But, see,
guidance, as far as may be, I supply.
- But, lo, the day is dying now, and we 43
cannot by night climb upward: well it were
to seek what pleasant resting-place there be.
- To right of us are spirits, over there, 46
if you allow, I will you to them lead.
joyfully will they all your friendship share.”
- “How is it,” Virgil asked, “he who would speed 49
upward by night is hampered? Is he stayed
by others, or does lack of power impede?”
- Then good Sordello a quick finger laid 52
across the ground, saying, “See, even this line
you could not cross when night has cast her shade.
- There is nought else that hinders the design 55
but darkness only, which impedes the will
in that it does its power undermine.
- Well might one downward wander from the hill 58
while the dark lines of the horizon hold
the hidden daylight there unbroken still.”
- Then said my Lord, as though he were controlled 61
by wonder, “Lead us then to where we may
enjoy that rest of which you have us told.”
- But little further had we gone that way 64
when I perceived the Mount was hollowed deep
as, here, the valleys are scooped out of clay.
- “There,” said the shade, “let us together creep 67
into the bosom of the hill and dwell
within, till we perceive the day’s first peep.”
- The winding path scarce from the level fell 70
that led us to the valley’s edge, between
the higher mounds that bounded the low dell.
- Gold and fine silver, cloths of crimson sheen 73
and silken white, bright indigo, the glow
that blazes from the splintered emerald’s green,

PURGATORIO

All were out-measured, as the less will show beneath the greater, by the grass and flowers that shone within that little vale below.	76
Nature not only painted all these bowers, but she diffused therein an odour sweet which to define or know surpassed our powers.	79
There, with the grass and flowers for their seat, ' <i>Salve Regina</i> ' sang one group of shades hidden by the rising verge of their retreat.	82
" Ere that the lessening Sun to shadow fades," our Mantuan leader said, " desire me not to lead you down into these flowery glades,	85
For, from this terrace which surrounds the spot better will you perceive their acts and mien than if among them you had entry got.	88
He who upon the highest seat is seen and who appears o'ercome with sadness for duties undone, whose lips unmoved have been	91
Amid their song, was Rudolf, Emperor, able the wounds of Italy to tend which now, too late, another would restore.	94
He, who to him some comfort seems to lend, once ruled the land whence Moldau brings her streams which, borne along the Elbe, with Ocean blend.	97
Ottocar was his name, whose childhood seems of better fame than bearded Wenceslaus whom nothing now from sloth and lust redeems.	100
That snub-nosed one, who near in counsel draws to him in aspect so benign, in flight died : and his tarnished Lily was the cause.	103
See how he beats his breast. And look aright how does the other sigh, and on his hand pillows his cheek as in despairing plight.	106
Sire, father-in-law to him who to his land of France is as a plague, his wicked ways and loathly life well do they understand.	109
He, stout of limb, who does his singing raise in unison with him of eagle nose, was bound with every cord of virtuous praise :	112

PURGATORIO

- And if that lad that sits behind him, close, 115
had followed him as King, men would have said
that worth from vessel into vessel flows.
- That is not said of those who followèd, 118
for James and Frederick hold the realms, no heir
to what is worth far more has enterèd.
- For through the branches it indeed is rare 121
that human virtue rises : so wills He
who gives that we may strive for it in prayer.
- To him of the high nose these words may be 124
applied, as to this Peter,—singing too,—
Provence, Apulia mourn this equally.
- Inferior to the plant from which it grew 127
so shows this seed, as Constance vaunts her mate,
as Beatrice or Margaret could not do.
- See there, the King of simple life, sedate, 130
sitting alone, Harry of England, he
may many a strong branch enumerate.
- He sitting on the ground beneath them,—see,— 133
is Marquis William, though his eyes he keep
upturned, his wars in Piedmont, bitterly
Monteferrato and Canavese weep.” 136

PURGATORIO CANTO VIII

'Twas now the hour when those upon the sea 1
 suffer in heart a tender woe that they
 parted that day from their dear friends must be ;
 Wherein Love's latest Pilgrim, far away, 4
 hears, tolling in his soul, the evening bell
 that seems to mourn the dying of the day.
 Then did I close my hearing's sense, and fell 7
 to gazing on one shade who seemed to move
 his hands, as though attention to compel.
 Both palms he held up to the sky above, 10
 looking towards the East, as who should cry
 to the Almighty, "Thou hast all my love !"
 '*Te lucis ante*,' then, melodiously, 13
 rose from his lips, with so devout a tone,
 it caught me from my senses utterly.
 Others accompanied him, one by one, 16
 through all the verses they their hymn pursued,
 scanning the central heavens piously.
 Now, Reader, that my sense be understood, 19
 be your eyes keen to catch the truth that lies
 behind these veils, where you may well intrude.
 And as I saw that army with its eyes 22
 strained upward, as though looking for some sign
 pale with expectancy, in humble guise,
 Lo, there appeared two angel forms divine. 25
 each angel bore a sword in his right hand
 whose blunted point with radiance seemed to shine.
 Green were their robes, as leaves that fresh expand, 28
 floating behind them as they downward flew,
 by pulsing of their green wings beaten and fanned.
 One lit above us, and the other flew 31
 down to the opposite bank. The company
 of shades was gathered all between these two.
 Bright shone their golden tresses, but the eye, 34
 blinded with light of each effulgent face,
 failed, as a sense strained too continuously.

P U R G A T O R I O

- "From Mary's bosom do they seek this place," 37
 Sordello said, "to guard this little vale
 from the great Snake that hither comes apace."
 And I who knew not whence it might assail, 40
 turned me, congealed with terror, to his side
 whose comfort and protection would not fail.
 Sordello said, "With those who here abide, 43
 these mighty shades, now let us join, for they
 will with our speech and sight be gratified."
 Scarce three steps downward had I ta'en my way 46
 when one I saw who gazed on me alone
 as though my face within his memory lay.
 And now the evening air had darker grown, 49
 yet not so dark but that, between his eyes
 and mine, what erst was hidden became known.
 We drew together. Glad to recognize 52
 you, good Judge Nino, was I, and to know
 that not among the lost your future lies !
 All words of welcome passed between us two. 55
 "How long is it," he asked, "since you have come
 o'er the wide seas that round this Mountain flow ?"
 "O," cried I, "but this morn I ceased to roam 58
 the realms of woe. In my first life am I,
 though journeying still towards my eternal home."
 At these my words, Sordello, suddenly 61
 and he, too, shrank as though in wonderment,
 as those who something marvellous descry.
 Sordello turned to Virgil, Nino bent 64
 to one who sat there, saying, "Conrad, rise,
 see what the grace of God to us has sent."
 Then to me, "By that grace that round you lies 67
 the gift of Him whose purposes are veiled
 so that one vainly for their meaning tries,
 When you again across that sea have sailed, 70
 tell my Giovanna for my soul to pray
 where innocent prayer at all times has prevailed.
 Her mother's love went from me in the day 73
 she laid her weeds aside, with which, unblest,
 fain would she once again herself array.

P U R G A T O R I O

Alas, in her example is a test 76
 of woman's love that will no longer bide
 than when it is by sight and touch expressed.
 The symbol of the Milanese's pride, 79
 his blazoned snake, her tomb will not so grace
 as would Gallura's Bird with wings spread wide."
 So spoke he, and the ardour of his face 82
 showed to me how a well-directed zeal
 in measure due within him found its place.
 Again, as to the mid point of the wheel 85
 of all the heavens did I raise my eyes
 where stars around the centre slowest steal.
 My Guide said, " Wherefore does your gazing rise 88
 upward so straightly ? " I replied, " To those
 three torches whose effulgence fills the skies."
 Then he to me, " The four great stars that rose 91
 at dawn this morning now have fallen low
 on yonder side and this new cluster glows."
 Even as he spoke, Sordello, crying, " Lo, 94
 our Enemy " ! started backward, suddenly,
 and with his finger tried the place to show.
 There, where the valley's border was least high 97
 I saw a snake, such as that one, may be,
 that tempted Eve the bitter fruit to try.
 Through grass and flowers the reptile came, and he 100
 oft turned his head against his back, awry
 as a beast sleeks its coat continually.
 My eyes saw not the heavenly falcons fly, 103
 and so I say no more than to declare
 that both moved from their stations there on high.
 Hearing the green wings beating through the air, 106
 the Serpent fled, and the bright angels wheeled
 till each I saw to his late post repair.
 The shade, to whom Judge Nino had appealed, 109
 looking at me through all that moving fight,
 his steady gaze did not a moment yield.
 Then he began, " So may your leading light 112
 find in your Will enough of wax to guide
 you to this mountain's last enamelled height,

PURGATORIO

As you, if but you know what may betide 115
in Valdimagra and that country round,
shall tell to me who once there dwelt in pride.
My name was Conrad, of that race renowned 118
of Malaspina; not the elder, I,
but of his blood, by purer love here bound
Unto mine own." "Ne'er through your territory," 121
I answered, "have I wandered, but what race
in Europe knows not its celebrity?
The honour of your house has left its trace 124
upon your lords, and on their lands, to those
even who have never been within that place.
And thus I swear to you as I shall close 127
my journey there on high, your race does ne'er
its glory both of sword and treasure lose.
Custom and Nature for its future care,— 130
though guilty spirits rack the earth,—alone,
by the straight path it doth undaunted fare."
Then he, "Now go. The sun shall not have gone 133
seven times to enter on his place of rest,
o'er which the four feet of the Ram are thrown,
Ere your opinion, courteously expressed, 136
shall be deep fastened in your heart and head,
by more than casual speech of man impressed,
If Judgment be not from her course misled." 139

PURGATORIO CANTO IX

Now was the Mistress of Tithonus old 1
 rising, white glimmering in the Eastern sky,
 from arms that did her lovingly enfold.
 Bright on her jewelled forehead seemed to lie 4
 the outline of that creature cold whose tail
 strikes human-kind with poisonous enmity :
 And Night, above us, two steps of the scale 7
 by which she rises, had attained. Apace
 the third began to spread its darksome veil.
 I who was still a child of Adam's race 10
 by sleep o'ercome, upon the grass lay prone
 where we five were together in one place.
 Then, when the awakening swallow, with sad tone, 13
 brings in the dawn, perchance remembering
 the burden of her sorrow long forgone :
 And when our spirits, outward wandering 16
 less prisoned are within the bounds of sense,
 our dream seems a divine, prophetic thing,
 I dreamed that poised, amid that heaven immense, 19
 an eagle, plumed with gold, with wings outspread
 hung silent, in the act of stooping, tense.
 To me it seemed as though I had been led 22
 to where young Ganymede his folk forsook
 to Jove's high consistory summonèd.
 I thought perchance here only does he look 25
 for prey, and from all other regions scorns
 to bear aught upwards in his talon's hook.
 When he had wheeled a while with gleaming turns, 28
 terrible as the lightning, he came down,
 and bore me upward to the sphere that burns.
 It seemed we both amid that fire were thrown, 31
 and thus in fancy scorched amid the blaze,
 slumber no longer did my senses drown.
 No otherwise Achilles, in amaze, 34
 wondered within his mind where he might be,
 and on his strange surroundings turned his gaze,

PURGATORIO

When him his mother, sleeping silently 37
within her arms, away from Chiron bore
to Scyros whence the Greeks drove him to sea,
Than did I marvel when with sleep no more 40
burdened, my face as pallid seemed to be
as one whom deadly terror freezes o'er.
My Comforter alone, sat close by me. 41
already now the Sun had shone two hours
and I gazed outward at the shining sea.
"Fear not," my Lord began, "this place of ours 46
is good and safe,—away with hesitancy,—
now must you rally your most vigorous powers,
For you are now at Purgatory. See 49
the wall that rings it round about, and, there,
the Gateway where a cleavage seems to be.
When you lay yonder, in the morning air, 52
your spirit lost in sleep within your breast,
in that low vale with flowers so sweet and fair,
A Lady came, and said, "'Tis my request, 55
for I am Lucia, that this one, in sleep,
I may take hence and make his journey blest.'
Sordello came not with us up this steep, 58
nor any of those noble ones. As day
grew bright, she bore you up. I tried to keep
Close by. She placed you here and showed where lay 62
the open entrance, with her lovely eyes :
then she and sleep together went their way."
As those assured awake in glad surprise 64
from dread that has affrighted them and find
that truth has made new hopes within them rise,
I was transformed. My terror-stricken mind 67
calmed as my Guide led where the ramparts rose,
and upward, in his steps, I came behind.
Reader, note how my subject loftier grows : 70
marvel not that with art I try to bear
the burden that these grander themes impose.
Nearer we drew, and then observed that where 73
a cleavage first had shown, as if, indeed,
the rampart-wall had been divided there,

P U R G A T O R I O

There was a Gate, and three steps seemed to lead 76
 thereto, each step being coloured differently.
 Its warder to our coming paid no heed.
 But, as my sight I wider strained, on high 79
 I saw him sitting on the topmost grade,
 his shining face too bright for human eye.
 And in his hand he held a naked blade 82
 that flashed the sunlight back so brilliantly,
 to look on it I hopeless efforts made.
 "There standing, answer what you want of me?" 85
 the Warder said. "Where has your escort gone?
 look lest to you your coming harmful be."
 "A heavenly Dame, to whom these things are known,"
 the Master said, "pointed us out this Gate, 89
 saying, 'Go yonder where the door is shown.'"
 "So may she speed your footsteps fortunate," 91
 the gentle Warder answered. "Come, then, here,
 and by these steps pursue your further fate."
 When we approached, lo, the first step was clear 94
 as whitest marble, and therein I saw
 beneath me, all my imaged form appear.
 The next was black as perse and many a flaw 97
 and crack had seamed it lengthwise and athwart,
 calcined as ash they from a furnace draw.
 The third, massed largely on the upper part, 100
 had the deep glow of porphyry, as red
 as blood that from a severed vein might start.
 On this, God's angel did with both feet tread 103
 while sitting on the threshold which appeared
 as if it were of diamond fashioned.
 Up these three steps, the angel's feet we neared, 106
 my Leader guiding me at my behest.
 he said, "Ask entry from this Guard revered."
 Then to these holy feet my brow I pressed 109
 and prayed that in his mercy he would let
 the Gate be opened, beating on my breast.
 Seven letters P upon my brow he set, 112
 carving them with his sword. "These wounds wash
 clean,"
 he said, "when entrance here within you get."

PURGATORIO

His dress in hue like earth was that has been	115
dry delved, or ashes. From beneath its fold	
two keys he drew. One was of silver sheen,	
The other fashioned was of purest gold.	118
first with the white, then with the yellow key	
he loosed the portal, to my joy untold.	
"Whenever one of these turns not," said he,	121
"rightly within the lock which thus I guard,	
to him who seeks there may no entrance be.	
One is of costlier substance, but more hard	124
the art and labour of the other's use,	
for it unlocks what is most firmly barred.	
From Peter do I hold them. Less the abuse,"	127
he said, "in opening much than closing fast,	
if shades do not prostration due refuse."	
Then did he draw the portal wide at last,	130
warning us, "Enter, but look not behind :	
he who does so forthwith is outward cast."	
We heard the Gate upon its hinges grind	133
which, bearing up the sacred Doors, are wrought	
of ringing metal, strongest of its kind.	
Tarpeia did not roar more loud, distraught	136
by losing her Metellus, whereby she	
for many a day to poverty was brought.	
Eager, I turned to hear what sound might be	139
within. <i>Te Deum laudamus</i> then I heard,	
music and voice mingling melodiously.	
Such, then, that chaunted hymn to me appeared	142
as a choir singing when the solemn sound	
by a sweet organ's harmony is shared,	
The words now clear, and now in music drowned.	145

P U R G A T O R I O C A N T O X

W hen we had passed the threshold of the Gate 1
 unused by souls with evil love possessed,
 because it makes the crooked way seem straight,
 I heard the ringing clangour which expressed 4
 its closing. Had I turned my eyes to see
 what pardon could one for such fault suggest ?
 Through a cleft of rock we climbed that, momentarily, 7
 moved back and forward, like a wave that flows,
 and then draws from the margin of the sea.
 " Here must one practise all the art he knows," 10
 my Master said, " thus thrown to left or right,
 to keep by the receding margin close."
 So were we hindered, toiling as we might, 13
 the Moon's round splendour had forsook the sky
 to rest beyond the confines of the night
 Ere we had passed beyond that needle's eye. 16
 but when, set free, we gained an open space,
 where backward seemed the mountain-side to lie,
 I was aware ; and we both faint trace 19
 discovered of our pathway, for it lay
 like some lone track across the desert's face.
 From where into the void it fell away 22
 to where the rocks ascended, its extent
 at three men's stature I might well assay.
 And as to right or left my sight I bent 25
 at furthest searching, in a like degree
 and form, this cornice round the Mountain went.
 Scarce venturing foot upon this path were we 28
 when I observed the circling bank of rock,
 to scale which seemed impossibility,
 To be of purest marble, every block 31
 carved in sweet forms of sculpture which to me
 nature and Polycletus seemed to mock.
 That Angel who bore hither the decree 34
 of heaven for peace on earth, long waited for
 in tears, which the closed gate of heaven made free,

PURGATORIO

There stood so vividly our eyes before	37
with gentle seeming and with lowly guise,	
no likeness he to a dumb image bore.	
Then to his lips an 'Ave' seemed to rise,	40
for there she pictured stood who turned the key	
that opened Love's supremest mysteries.	
' <i>Ecce ancilla Dei!</i> ' seemed to be	43
expressed in her sweet attitude, as those	
signs which imprinted upon wax we see.	
"Let not your mind ought of these marvels lose,	46
seeing one part alone," my Master said,	
as I, to where his heart beat, kept me close.	
Wherefore I turned, and as I moved my head,	49
behind the place where Mary's image stood,	
past him who thus my wandering footsteps led,	
Another legend on the rock I viewed.	52
whereat I crossed by Virgil's further side	
that its full meaning might be understood.	
There, carven on the marble I descried	55
the sacred Ark by oxen drawn along	
whence we have learned to fear presumptuous pride.	
In front were many people and the throng	58
was parted into seven choirs,—my eyes	
accepted, though my ears denied their song.	
So plainly did I see the incense rise,	61
though with no savour sweet the air was blent,	
its fragrance full I seemed to realise.	
Before the Ark the humble Psalmist went	64
dancing, with skirts upgirded, and thus, more	
and less than Kinghood did he represent.	
Opposite him sat Michal, looking o'er	67
a palace window high, wherefrom her face	
a look of mingled scorn and sadness bore.	
Again I moved to scan, beyond that place	70
where Michal sat, another storied tale	
that in the still white marble I could trace.	
There was the Roman Prince, whose worth and zeal	
so moved Pope Gregory to his great emprise	74
and made his power in the end prevail :	

P U R G A T O R I O

I speak of Trajan, Emperor : with cries 76
 and tears of sorrow a poor woman stood
 holding his bridle-rein in suppliant guise.
 Around him thronged a trampling multitude 79
 of horsemen and, above him, in the wind
 fluttered and gleamed the eagle's golden brood.
 Among all these her voice she seemed to find, 82
 crying, " My Lord, grant vengeance for my son
 whose death has left my broken heart behind."
 He seemed to answer her, " It shall be done 85
 when I return." And she, with grief distraught,
 urgent for her entreaty to be won,
 Still cried, " And if from battle you come not ? " 88
 " Another in my place will serve," said he.
 " What gain to you good deeds by others wrought ? "
 She wailed. He answered, " Of good comfort be. 91
 through you my duty calls me ere I go,
 justice and pity both constraining me."
 He, to whom nought is new, had caused to flow 94
 this kind of visible speech which here on earth
 by skill of human sculptor none may know.
 While I rejoiced to see thus bodied forth 97
 images of humility so sweet
 and precious from His hand who gave them birth,
 " A crowd," the Poet said, " comes us to meet 100
 whose steps are slow and few. By these sent on,
 our way by higher stairs may be more fleet."
 My eyes, by new things ever gladly won, 103
 were fain such sights to see and were not slow
 in turning towards my wise companion.
 I would not, Reader, have you to forego 106
 any fair purposes by fear o'ercast
 of how God makes men pay the debt they owe.
 Be not at forms of punishment aghast. 109
 think of what lies beyond. At worst, I say,
 beyond the Judgment none of them can last.
 Then I began, " Master, upon the way 112
 towards us I see strange forms, not human, yet
 I know not what, my vision goes astray."

PURGATORIO

- “The heavy punishment that they have met,” 115
he said, “so bends them downwards to the ground,
my eyes at first were at defiance set.
- Look closely when your vision has unwound 118
what comes beneath those stones, and note how they
with constant beating make their breasts resound.”
- Proud Christians who in weary misery stay 121
and who with sickening mental vision trust
in what are backward steps upon the way,
- See you not we are worms born in the dust 124
yet to be as an angel butterfly
defenceless, to the bar of judgment thrust?
- Why does your mental vision soar so high, 127
who but imperfect insects seem to be,
within whose crust true form does not yet lie?
- As sometimes, holding up a roof we see 130
a corbel fashioned as a figure bent
with breast pressed downward upon either knee,
- Which wakes in us peculiar discontent 133
when we behold it, so I saw each shade
when on them all my sight was more intent.
- Some more, and some less heavily o’erlaid, 136
’tis true they varied in the loads they bore,
yet, he who most of patience had displayed,
- Tearfully seemed to cry, “I can no more.” 139

PURGATORIO CANTO XI

"Father who art in heaven, whose charity, 1
 boundless, enfolds the first existences
 created by Thy might supreme on high,
 Praised be Thy name : let creatures all confess 4
 Thy power and greatness : to give thanks is due
 for Thy sweet breath that comes our souls to bless.
 And for Thy Kingdom's peace we humbly sue 7
 which, if it do not please Thee to bestow,
 our highest wit can never reach unto.
 And, as Thine angels in the heavens, we know, 10
 lay down their wills in sacrifice and sing
 ' Hosannas,' let us on the earth do so.
 Our daily shower of manna to us bring, 13
 for, wanting that, in this rough wilderness
 he fails who is most keen on journeying.
 As we forgive our enemies, no less 16
 in loving-kindness wipe our faults away,
 and on our own poor merits lay not stress.
 Try not our spirits, that too lightly stray 19
 from Thee, by wiles of the old Enemy :
 deliver us from his attacks, we pray.
 If, for us here, dear Lord, no need there be 22
 for this last prayer, yet do we plead for those
 behind us lingering in humanity."
 Such were the words of prayer that from them rose 25
 who prayed for us and for themselves, bowed down
 by weights such as in dreams mar our repose.
 Unequal to their woe, with many a moan 28
 they crept along that terrace, working free
 from foul earth-mists that round their souls had grown.
 If these, there, pray for us, how well may we 31
 offer a supplication for their sake
 if firm in God our wills implanted be ?
 It is our task to help those shades who take 34
 such pains to cleanse their souls that, purged from sin,
 pure, in the starry spheres they yet may wake.

P U R G A T O R I O

"Lo, as from Pity and Justice you may win 37
 release and yet your happy pinions spread,
 winging you to the bliss you would be in,—
 Show us where, right or left, we may be sped 40
 most quickly towards the stair,—if several ways,
 which may most easily be adventurèd.
 On him, who journeys here with me, there weighs 43
 the load of Adam's flesh that yet he wears,
 and him, so keen to mount, that weight delays."
 It was not manifest which voice of theirs 46
 it was which, in the reply to this request
 of him I followed, then came to our ears.
 "Come with us to the right along this crest 49
 and you will see the pathway, whose ascent
 need not the steps of living man prevent.
 Were it not that my once proud neck is bent 52
 so sorely by the stone that rests thereon
 I cannot fully follow my intent,
 His face, who living I fain would look upon 55
 although unnamed, may yet be known to me,
 his pity for my sorrows may be won.
 A Latin, I, of Tuscan family, 58
 Guglielmo Aldobrandesci was my sire,—
 I know not if that name familiar be
 To you. My ancient blood was set on fire 61
 by gallant deeds my race had done and so,
 forgetful of our land, did I aspire
 In insolence, to all my scorn to show, 64
 that wrought my death, as know the Sieneſe,
 and every child in Campagnatico.
 Umberto am I ; and this fell disease 67
 of pride not only brought me to my fate
 but my companions, ruining all of these.
 My ſin here 'mong the dead I expiate, 70
 bearing the load that, when in life, I ſcorned,
 till God be pleaſed my miſery to abate."
 I bent my face to liſten and one turned, 73
 not he who ſpoke, but one who, downward bent
 with a like burden, his miſfortune mourned.

P U R G A T O R I O

He saw me and he knew my name : intent,	76
as he cried out, he kept his eyes on mine	
with pain as I, beside him, stooping went.	
“ O,” cried I, “ Oderisi I divine	79
beneath, Agubbio’s pride, light of that art	
in which the French ‘ Illuminators ’ shine.”	
“ Brother, there is more gladness in a chart	82
painted by Francis of Bologna now.	
his the full honour, mine is but a part.	
Such courtesy I did not care to show	85
when living, for it was my heart’s intent	
the fullest excellence of art to know.	
Of such a pride this is the punishment.	88
nor yet should I be here, but that, with power	
to sin, I knelt to God as penitent.	
O vain the glory of man’s strength ! An hour	91
its verdure lasts, if on its topmost height	
rude ages do not devastation pour.	
Cimabue in painting, held of right	94
the sovereignty. That, Giotto’s fame denies	
so that his master’s name is shadowed quite.	
One Guido from the other takes the prize	97
in poetry and mastery of our tongue :	
yet in that nest another may arise	
To oust them both. Fame, as the breeze, is flung	100
now hence now thence and, as the wind may blow,	
the name is altered and new praises sung.	
What greater glory does man ever know	103
if he abandon life far gone in years,	
than if from ‘ pap ’ and childish joys he go	
After a thousand years ? That space appears	106
to the Eternal as a twinkling eye	
is to the slowest movement of the spheres.	
All Tuscany once was loud to glorify	109
him who moves there so slow. In Siena, now,	
a whisper of him you can not descry.	
There he was lord what time the furious glow	112
of Florence’s fierce hatred was put out,	
who then was proud as now she is brought low.	

PURGATORIO

Your fame is as the blades of grass which sprout 115
green from the ground beneath his powerful rays
who withers them and does their verdure flout."
Then I to him, "Your words within me raise 118
devout humility and set at nought
my swelling pride. What is his name and place
Of whom you speak?" "Salvani, hither brought 121
from Provence," answered he, "because his own
to make Siena he had proudly thought.
Thus goes he and has gone till he atone 124
his fault, for in this coinage must one pay
who beyond bounds of human pride has gone."
I said, "If those, who upon earth delay, 127
till life is all but spent, their penitence,
remain below nor reach this higher way
Except by force of prayer, how is he thence 130
delivered ere the period he has passed
of his first life, and by what influence?"
"When he his highest honours had amassed," 133
he said, "then in Siena's market-stance
he freely stood, and shame from him he cast;
And there, to save a friend whom Charles, in France
had put in prison and who in suffering lay, 137
trembling all o'er, sought his deliverance.
No more I speak: I scarce know what I say, 139
save darkly, but ere long you too will know
the meaning when your neighbours act this way.
This deed released him from the place below." 142

PURGATORIO CANTO XII

With equal step, like oxen at the plough, 1
 I and that burdened soul pursued our way
 as long as my sweet Leader would allow :
 But when "Leave him alone," I heard him say, 4
 "here it is well each one with sail and oar
 should urge his bark as quickly as he may,"
 Erect I drew my body up, as more 7
 ready for walking, yet my inward mind
 remained bowed down and sunken as before.
 So had I moved on willingly, behind 10
 my Master's steps, and each of us had showed
 how swiftly we could tread the path assigned,
 When he said, "See, the surface of this road 13
 you well may scan for solace. Downward gaze
 upon the path on which your feet have trod."
 As to keep memory green the living raise 16
 tombs o'er the buried which their story bear,
 and keep alive the records of their praise,
 Which oft brings tears to those who there repair, 19
 touched by remembrance of the loved ones dead,
 which only those of tender heart can share ;
 So saw I all that pathway sculptured, 22
 but with an unsurpassed accomplishment
 as far as round the hill the terrace spread.
 One saw I, once God's noblest creature sent 25
 downwards, from out high heaven, with a glare
 like to the lightning's terrible descent.
 I saw Briareus, opposite, lying there 28
 transfixed with bolt from heaven and frozen o'er
 and heavy with the chill of death's despair.
 I saw Thymbraeus, Pallas and Mars who bore 31
 their arms still at their father's side and gazed
 on Giants' limbs there scattered in their gore.
 Nimrod I saw beside the Tower he raised 34
 as if bewildered, gazing on the race
 who, through all Shinar, his ambition praised.

P U R G A T O R I O

- O Niobe, hot tears bedewed my face 37
 above your image there in sorrow set !
 on either side seven slain ones could I trace.
- O Saul, who death at your own sword's point met, 40
 the mountains of Gilboa round you now
 never by rain or dews of heaven are wet !
- O mad Arachne, you with saddened brow 43
 half changed into a spider, hung upon
 the strands you wrought whose weaving brought you
 low !
- O Rehoboam, there, upon the stone 46
 your carven form no longer threats,—in dread
 of chaos, forth in a chariot it has gone.
- Then pictured on the pathway's stony bed 49
 I saw Alcmaeon who the gem ill-won
 so costly to his mother rendered.
- It showed Sennacherib fiercely set upon 52
 by his own sons within the Temple, then
 left lifeless there when the foul deed was done.
- It showed the ruin and cruel slaughter of men 55
 wrought by Tomyris, who to Cyrus said,
 " You thirst for blood, I fill you once again."
- It showed the Assyrian army disarrayed 58
 in flight : and Holofernes slain, and all
 the gruesome relics of the crime displayed.
- The ruins and the ashes of Troy's fall 61
 I saw there. Ilium ! how low you lay
 in misery, did the carven stone recall !
- The brush or chisel that could so display 64
 the shades and lines and so these scenes contrive,
 the subtlest skill might witness with dismay.
- Dead were the dead : the living were alive : 67
 and he, who all these things himself had seen,
 no clearer vision could from that derive
- Than mine. O you, Eve's children who have been 70
 so proudly lifted up, march on, with eyes
 unbent, nor o'er your dreadful pathway lean.
- Further, where round the Mount this circle lies, 73
 we now had gone and more of light was spent
 than our restricted sense could realise,

P U R G A T O R I O

When he, who ever on before me went, 76
 began, " Now raise your head, no time is this
 to keep it on these scenes for ever bent.

See there, an angel in our pathway is 79
 waiting to meet with us, and now the sun
 does his sixth shining handmaiden dismiss.

Let him by grace of reverence be won. 82
 so, he will gladly further our ascent.
 never again will come the day now done."

I was so used to his admonishment 85
 that never did I linger to obey,
 nor ever did I doubt what his words meant.

The lovely creature came : all his array 88
 was purest white and from his face was shed
 the trembling of a star at dawn of day.

Forth stretched he both his arms, his wings he spread
 and said, " Come, for the steps are here close by 92
 and easily may the ascent be ventured."

To such a welcome few indeed come nigh. 94
 oh, human kind, why at a light wind's shock
 do you sink down, born upwards thus to fly ?

He led us to a cleavage in the rock 97
 and there upon my forehead beat his wings
 promising safety from that gentle stroke.

As on the right, one mounts the steep where clings 100
 the Church, o'er Rubaconte, watching well
 a Town well ruled in all its orderings,

Steps break the upright bank, as histories tell 103
 made when the City's records were secure,
 and to its measuring staff no harm befell,

So is the climb more easy to endure 106
 which steeply slopes down from the higher round.
 on either side rocks hedge the narrow floor.

Then as we turned there came a dulcet sound, 109
 ' *Beati pauperes spiritu* ' was sung,—
 to tell its sweetness words can not be found.

Ah ! what a change from entrances among 112
 the glooms of Hell. Here through sweet songs we came
 and there, through wailings from fierce agony wrung !

PURGATORIO

Now, as we went, our weight seemed not the same 115
as when we wandered yonder far below :
much lighter in its progress seemed my frame.
Wherefore I said : “ Oh, Master, let me know 118
what weight is lifted from me so that I
feel scarcely any labour as I go.”
He answered, “ When these Ps, which, gradually, 121
are fading from your brow erased shall be,
as this one was by him we have passed by,
Then will your feet, with keen volition free, 124
feel not at all their toil but will delight
to move up higher by each new degree.
Then did I, as some unsuspecting wight 127
learns that upon his head something is placed
of which he knows not but by others’ sight,
Raise up my hand by which such things are traced 130
by careful search and service rendered
which in the eyesight’s range is not embraced,
And with the fingers on my forehead spread 133
I found but six Ps there, of those cut while
with him who bore the keys I parleyèd,
Whereat I saw my gentle Master smile. 136

PURGATORIO CANTO XIII

Now were we at the summit of the stair 1
 where once again the Mount is circled round,
 that Mount by which we reach the sinless air.
 There, an encircling terrace may be found 4
 that like the first is fashioned, but that here
 with narrower circle is the mountain bound.
 No shades are there, nor signs of them appear, 7
 here all the bank and all the path has ta'en
 the hue of the grey precipices near.
 "If here we try," my Guide said, "to obtain 10
 guidance from those who meet us, I surmise
 too long inactive we should thus remain."
 Then fixing on the Sun his eager eyes 13
 he turned, as on the centre of his right,
 that part of him that to the leftward lies.
 "O Thou in whom I trust, oh, sweetest Light, 16
 entering on this new way our footsteps lead,"
 he cried, "as we would fain ascend this height.
 The world is warmed by thee, and lit indeed : 19
 if reason but allow, in all our ways
 I pray your guidance may our journey speed."
 As much as here is counted in the space 22
 of a full mile had we already gone,
 so, in our eager will, we scorned delays,
 When, flying towards us, spirits had begun 25
 to speak to us, although invisibly,
 who to Love's table sweetly urged us on.
 '*Vinum non habent*' loudly seemed to fly 28
 past us upon the air and, after, rose
 behind us the same note repeatedly.
 And as that sound in distance seemed to close, 31
 another voice went past us with the cry,
 'I am Orestes.' "O what cries are those ?
 Tell me their meaning, Father," then said I. 34
 and as I spoke a third voice reached our ears,
 'Love them that to you act despitefully.'

PURGATORIO

- My Master good replied, " Here there appears 37
upon this terrace, Envy's punishment :
its every scourge Love's stinging whip-cord bears :
A different sound is from the bridle sent. 40
it you will hear, I doubt not, ere upon
the Pass of Pardon your regard is bent.
But as your vision steadily has gone 43
forward, you will perceive that people rest
before us all along this bank of stone."
My vision then in front of me I pressed 46
and saw those shades sitting together, all
in cloaks, that matched the stone in colour, dressed.
When we had gone some way along the wall 49
" Mary, pray for us !" cried they. Others began
on Michael, Peter and all saints to call.
I do not deem on earth there lives a man 52
so hardened that his heart would not have bled
with pity, had he chanced that scene to scan.
For, as my footsteps nearer to them led 55
so that their faces I could plainly see,
grief held me, and my tears were hotly shed.
Covered with coarse hair-cloth they seemed to be : 58
one to the other's shoulder lent his aid
and all upon the rock leaned heavily,
Even as the blind, in poverty arrayed, 61
stand at the ' Pardons,' begging for their needs,
one's head upon the other's shoulder laid,
For this in gentle heart, to pity leads : 64
besides the sound of their beseeching cries
for alms, their miserable aspect pleads.
To blind men suns unprofitably rise 67
so, for those shades, where now I spoke, his light
came not with bounteous largess to their eyes.
Their eyelids did an iron wire unite 70
pierced through, as we treat hawks whose savage mood
makes them unquiet and restless in their flight.
I seemed to wrong them thus their sight to elude 73
while seeing them, and so I turned again
to him whose counsel always wrought me good.

PURGATORIO

Before I spoke he knew my reasoning plain 76
 and therefore waited not for word or sign.
 "Speak to them," said he, "but your words restrain."
 Virgil beside me walked where, from this line 79
 of precipices, one might readily fall,
 because no rampart did its edge define.
 Between me and the other rocky wall 82
 these shades devout remained who forced their tears
 through horrid seams that did my sight appal.
 I turned and said, "O shades of whom none fears 85
 but that he will behold the Light whose ray
 has been his heart's desire for all these years,
 So may divine grace brush the scum away 88
 that lies upon your conscience, so that clear
 the stream of memory may take its way,
 Tell me, (for so to speak were kind and dear) 91
 if any of you be of Latin race:
 it may be well for him if this I hear."
 "O brother mine, we all of us have place 94
 in a true City: yet, in Italy
 you seek those who were pilgrims for a space."
 This answer came from one who seemed to lie 97
 forward from where I stood, so that I made
 my voice towards him be heard more readily.
 Among the rest of them I saw a shade 100
 expectant: if you ask me how I knew,—
 her lifted chin the blind's appeal conveyed.
 "Spirit," I said, "who do yourself subdue 103
 to rise up higher, if that be your cry,
 by place or name, answer me, who are you?"
 "I was a Sieneſe," ſhe ſaid, "and try 106
 here to waſh clean the ſinful life I led,
 weeping to Him to help us from on high.
 I was not wiſe, though Sapia chriſtenèd, 109
 for others' hurt to me more joy could lend
 than when my life was by good fortune ſped.
 And leſt you fear ſome falſe thing I pretend, 112
 hear if I was not mad, as I have told.
 when down my arch of life began to bend,

P U R G A T O R I O

Between my townsmen and their enemies bold 115
 a battle raged near Collè, and I prayed
 to God that here His will He would unfold.
 My friends were worsted and all disarrayed 118
 in bitter flight : my heart, seeing their rout
 was gladder than it ever had been made,
 So that I raised my impudent face to shout 121
 like blackbird to the sky, ' I fear thee not,'
 when for a little space the Sun shines out.
 Then, in my life's last hours I would have sought 124
 my peace with God. Not yet that debt would be
 lessened by this my penitential lot,
 Had not Pier Pettinagno prayed for me 127
 in his devout petitions who with tears
 and pity took me to his charity.
 But who are you who come, as it appears, 130
 with eyes unsewn to know our fortunes fain,
 whose words bring sounds of breathing to our ears ? "
 " My eyes," I said, " shall here from me be ta'en 133
 but not for long, for small was the offence
 when once I did my sight in envy strain.
 More dread have I of those dark regions whence 136
 I journey, whose dread memory racks my soul
 that still upon it feels their imminence."
 Then she, " How come you here ? By whose control
 do you ascend, if still you fear to fall ? " 140
 " My silent Guide here leads me to my goal,
 And I am of the living. On me call, 142
 spirit elect, if you desire that I
 should move me to some aid effectual."
 " To hear these words is such a novelty," 145
 she said, " in them the love of God I see
 towards you, for me do not your prayers deny.
 If ever you the land of Tuscany 148
 shall tread, I pray, by all you most desire,
 my fame among my folk restored may be.
 Seek them among the vain ones who aspire 151
 to Talamone, by which more is lost
 than seeking for Diana may require,
 For there the Admirals' lives will pay the cost." 154

PURGATORIO CANTO XIV

“Who, then, is he who circles round our hill 1
before that death has given him power to fly :
who opens and who shuts his eyes at will ? ”
“ I know him not, but you may well descry 4
he comes not here alone. You, who are near,
accost him gently, that he may reply.”
So spoke two spirits who together were 7
there, on the right close leaning each on each.
towards mine I saw them both their faces rear.
Then one thus spoke, “ O spirit who doth reach 10
towards heaven while still in mortal body seen,
tell us, and so console us by your speech :
Whence come you, and who are you ? For, I ween,
we well may marvel when such grace we see 14
as in man’s history never yet has been.”
Then I, “ A stream there is in Tuscany 16
that down from Falterona falls and flows
more than a hundred miles to reach the sea.
I bring my body from its banks. To those 19
who ask ’twere vain to tell my name, till now
the sound of it in rumour no one knows.”
“ If the true meaning of your speech allow 22
my intellect to reach it,” he replied,
“ you speak of Arno.” Then the other, “ How
Does he so speak as though by name denied 25
he strove to hide that stream as one might cloak
something that shames him or has horrified ? ”
Then he who thus was questioned by him spoke, 28
“ I know not why, indeed, but it were well
that valley’s name should perish at a stroke.
Beginning where the rugged mountains swell 31
that from Pelorum are cut off and fed
from slopes whose verdure all the rest excel,
To where the burden is deliverèd 34
of all that heaven has soaked up from the sea,
drawn down by many a winding river bed,

P U R G A T O R I O

Virtue is banished as an enemy	37
by all—snake-like—from evil in the place	
or by their habit of malignity.	
Wherefore the dwellers in that narrow space	40
have changed their nature so that now they seem	
to pasture like fell Circè's prisoned race.	
Among foul hogs at first the feeble stream	43
flows who more fit for acorn mast appear	
than ought of which man's appetite may dream.	
Then among curs the valley seems to veer,	46
who snarl beyond their power, and, as it goes,	
it seems to turn from them as with a sneer.	
Still passing onwards it encounters those	49
from curs grown into wolves, as it grows wide,	
this cursed ditch which evil fates enclose.	
Down through deep clefts, then, foxes are descried	52
so full of fraudulent wiles and treachery,	
they fear no trap that may their craft elide.	
Nor shall I cease to speak though hearing me	55
another stands. Ah, well for him to know	
what is bestowed on me of prophecy !	
I see your grandson who becomes a foe	58
and hunter of these wolves, who by the ways	
bordering on that fierce stream, in terror go.	
He sells their very flesh while life still stays,	61
then slaughters them like beeves outworn and old,—	
his honour with these many lives he slays.	
From out the wood that does such sorrow hold	64
bloody he comes nor will that place again	
reflourish when a thousand years are told."	
As at the telling of some grievous pain	67
the listener's face is troubled, whitherso'er	
comes over him misfortune's perilous strain,	
So did that shade a mournful aspect wear	70
as, leaning to the speaker, sadly, he	
drank in these words of anger and despair.	
The speaker's face, the other's melancholy,	73
impatient made me both their names to know.	
with prayers I asked them to enlighten me.	

PURGATORIO

Then he replied who first addressed me, "So, you would that I should answer in the way yourself, to me, but now, refused to do :	76
But since God wills that such a splendid ray of grace in you appears, he who is named Guido del Duca will not say you nay.	79
My blood with envy was so fierce inflamed that, when I saw a man in happy mood, my face with livid jealousy was shamed.	82
And as I sowed, I reap. Oh, human brood why do you set your heart a life to win that would from it companionship exclude ?	85
He with me, here, is Rinier : none within Calboli's house have so its honour raised, nor has he found an heir 'mong all his kin.	88
Not only has his blood been so debased 'tween Po and Reno, and the hills and shore— its truth and honour also are erased—	91
For in their boundaries is a noisome store of poisonous growths, so that the toil were slow ere tillage there could make it clean once more.	94
Where is good Lizio ? Where is Arrigo Manardi ? Guido di Carpigna ? Where Pier Traversaro ? Each Romagnuolo	97
Is bastard now ! When shall they ever rear a Fabbro in Bologna ? When shall a flower of Fosco's lowly Faenzan stem appear ?	100
Many I weep, remembering in this hour Guido da Prata, Ugolin d'Azzo, too : marvel not, Tuscan, at such friendship's power.	103
Federigo Tignoso whom I knew and Traversaro's house,—so, too, I mourn the Anastagi,—heirless both, these two.	106
The ladies and the knights, the lightly-borne toils of our sports which love and courtesy made dear to us,—now of all beauty shorn	109
By wickedness ! O Brettinoro, why do you delay to leave whence many a one besides your house flees such iniquity ?	112

P U R G A T O R I O

- Well is it Bagnacaval has no son : 115
 and ill do Castrocaro and Conio
 lengthening the worthless race they have begun.
- Then the Pagani's home no more shall know 118
 their Demon, they may yet do well, but still,
 no stainless record can their story show.
- You, Ugolin de' Fantoli, no ill 121
 can come of you, for ended is your line
 and none a more degenerate place can fill.
- But, Tuscan, go you on. I more incline 124
 to weeping than to talking of these things,
 so hath our converse wrung this heart of mine."
- Then, as we turned to further journeyings 127
 we knew those dear souls heard us as we went :
 their silence made more bold our wanderings.
- As to our lonely road our steps we bent, 130
 a loud voice smote upon us suddenly,
 like lightning when the startled air is rent,
- Saying, "Whoe'er finds me shall slaughter me." 133
 then fled as rolls away the thunder's sound
 when the great cloud its burden has set free.
- Scarce had the first voice echoed all around 136
 than yet another crashed like the loud tone
 that follows when the cloud its voice has found.
- "I am Aglaurus who was turned to stone." 139
 as to the poet I strove to press me close,
 backward a step, not forward had I gone.
- Now all the air was wrapped in soft repose 142
 and he spoke thus, "That was the hardest bit
 that should on man its sharp restraint impose.
- But you take readily the baits that flit 145
 before you on the hook of the Old Foe :
 no lure or bridle can prevail o'er it.
- The heavens call on you as they circling go : 148
 all their eternal splendours they display
 and yet your gaze is fixed on earth below.
- He who knows all with blows doth you repay." 151

PURGATORIO CANTO XV

As much as from the third hour is in sight 1
till dawn, of that great sphere which sports and plays
now here now there, as with a child's delight,
So much still lingered of the Sun's last rays. 4
as he drew near his setting, there it seemed
vespers, while it was midnight at this place.
His rays now full upon our faces gleamed, 7
for so far had we circled that we went
westwards to where the sunset's glory streamed.
And thus I felt my brow more heavily bent 10
with weight of splendour, and my mind was dazed
at things whose meaning was not evident.
So, to my brows my hands I upward raised 13
and made a little shadow there, that broke
the excess of radiance that upon us blazed.
As rays of light fall with a sudden stroke 16
on water or a mirror's face and start
back at that angle which at first they took,
Nor from the centre plummet line depart, 19
save to an equal space,—so are we taught
by lessons of experience and art :
Even thus it seemed that then my sight was caught 22
by a reflected light in front of me
from which my eyes would fain have refuge sought.
“ Sweet Father, what is that which seems to be 25
too glorious for my eyes to see aright,
and towards us now is moving gradually ? ”
“ Marvel not,” said he, “ that so clothed in light 28
Heaven's household shine and daze your mortal eyes :
he comes our progress upward to invite.
Soon will you greet such with a glad surprise 31
nor grieve as now. Your happiness will grow
as high as in your nature it may rise.”
When we had reached the blessed angel, lo, 34
he said in joyful accents, “ Enter here,—
this stair is easier than those below.”

PURGATORIO

- Then, as we mounted, we began to hear 37
'Beati misericordes,' further back,
 and *'Blessed thou who conquerest,'* chanted clear.
 Alone, my Guide and I resumed our track 40
 still upward and I deemed that, as we went,
 gain from his counsels wise I should not lack.
 "What was it, then, the Romagnuolo meant 43
 by *'they who all companionship exclude'?* "
 I said as towards him, questioning, I leant.
 He answered me, "His blemish understood, 46
 marvel not if its evil he confess
 that fewer may its hurtfulness have rued.
 Where your desires lie, and the portion less 49
 by partnership and sharing,—in that case,
 a bellows to your sighs is enviousness.
 If on the highest sphere your hopes you place 52
 and your desires, this loss you need not fear
 and can from out your heart this terror chase :
 For, by so many voices that appear 55
 claiming that *'this is ours,'* so many gain
 that good and in their hearts' cell love burns clear."
 "I fast the more," I said, "and less obtain 58
 of satisfaction than if I had been
 silent,—and more perplexities remain.
 How can it be that good, so shared between 61
 a number, shall grow greater and not less ?
 is it not lessened to those who intervene ? "
 Then he, "Because you fix on earthliness 64
 your gaze : and from above, where the true light
 shines, you still draw but shafts of gloominess.
 That Good, Ineffable and Infinite, 67
 which shines on high, draws to the side of Love
 as sunshine falls on all that is most bright.
 It mingles what it carries from above 70
 with what it finds and, as it stretches wide,
 its rays full of eternal virtue move.
 On high more of true knowledge does abide, 73
 more are there to be loved and Love is more,
 as mirrors shining back on either side.

P U R G A T O R I O

If this does not your emptiness restore, 76
 soon Beatrice you will behold and she
 will satisfy all longings felt before.
 Strive that these five remaining wounds may be 79
 healed as the other two. By suffering,
 alone, from wounds like this are you set free."
 Then as I reached the next encircling ring 82
 I would have said, 'You satisfy me'—my eyes
 with wonder gazed,—I spoke not anything.
 It seemed as if a dream of ecstasies 85
 sudden enfolded me and in my view
 a Temple full of people seemed to rise.
 And there a Lady, as she entered through 88
 the doorway, with a mother's accents said,
 " Why, thus, my son, do you deal with us? You
 Your father and I have sought for, sore dismayed." 91
 and as she ceased her speaking, that which showed
 in this first vision, from me seemed to fade.
 I saw another woman whose eyes flowed 94
 with waters such as rise when grief is blent
 with bitterness, by anger keen bestowed.
 " If you are he who holds the government," 97
 she cried, "of that famed town whose name caused fight
 among the gods, whence light of the Arts is sent,
 Avenge me of those daring arms whose might 100
 embraced our daughter, O Pisistratus."
 gently on her his glances seemed to light,
 And he replied benignly, " What by us 103
 is to be done to him who should do ill,
 if we condemn one who has loved us thus? "
 Then saw I the fierce fire of anger fill 106
 a people who with stones a youth assailed,
 urging each other, and crying out, " Kill, Kill."
 Slow sinking to the earth his powers failed 109
 heavy with death already, but his eyes
 made gates through which all heaven was revealed,
 Praying the Almighty, 'mid his agonies 112
 to pardon his tormentors, with that look
 at which the door of pity open flies.

PURGATORIO

- Returning back, my soul its course then took 115
to those things which outside of it are true,
visions that were not falsehoods, I forsook.
- My Guide observed me as my motions grew 118
like those of one released from sleep and said,
"Why now so languid grown? What aileth you?
That for full half a league thus you have sped 121
veiling your eyes and with unsteady gait,
as one by wine or slumber conquered?"
- "Sweet Father mine," I said, "I will relate, 124
if you but hear, what marvels I have seen
since failing limbs reduced me to this state."
Then he said, "Though a hundred masks have been 127
over your face, 'twould not avail from me
your thoughts, however slight they be, to screen.
That which you saw was shown you lest you flee 130
from taking to your heart the streams of peace
that from the eternal fount flow ceaselessly.
- I did not ask what ailed you as do these 133
who look with eyes that do not recognise
when all the body's life and motions cease:
- But that I asked to rouse your energies, 136
as those require some spurring who are slow
to use the powers their wakefulness supplies."
- Still did we journey through the evening glow 139
against the falling but refulgent rays,
straining our sight as far as it might go.
- Little by little, smoke began to raise 142
its shadow on us like the gloom of night:
nor could we fly from that encircling haze
That dimmed the pure air and confused our sight. 145

P U R G A T O R I O C A N T O X V I

Blackness of Hell and of a starless night 1
 unlighted over all the barren sky,
 when every cloud is gathered in heaven's height,
 Ne'er spread before my eyes a canopy 4
 so gross as that dark smoke that round us blew,
 nor one of such a black asperity.
 Our eyes we could not open. Then he drew, 7
 my wise and faithful Escort, to my side
 offering his shoulder to support me through.
 And as a blind man walks behind his guide, 10
 so that he may not stray nor strike upon
 hurtful or fatal things that may betide,
 Through the foul black air went I ever on 13
 listening to what my Guide said,—“ Have a care
 lest you be cut from your companion.”
 Then heard I voices like the sound of prayer 16
 for peace and pity from the Lamb of God
 who takes away sin's burden everywhere.
 With ‘ *Agnus Dei* ’ the singing spread abroad, 19
 all in such unison and measure clear
 that they together perfect concord showed.
 “ Are those, then, spirits, Master, that I hear ? ” 22
 I said. “ You rightly judge them,” he replied,
 “ to loose the bonds of anger are they here.”
 “ And who are you who thus our smoke divide 25
 and speak to us as if still among those
 who measure by the kalends time and tide ? ”
 So speaking, by our side a voice arose. 28
 “ Answer ” my Master bade me, “ and enquire
 if by this track the pathway upward goes.”
 “ Being,” I said, “ who fain would here attire 31
 your soul to join its Maker, you will hear
 marvels, if me you follow close nor tire.”
 “ You I will follow as I may do here,” 34
 he said, “ and hearing will supply the place
 of sight, if in this smoke it disappear.”

P U R G A T O R I O

Then I began, " Ere death comes to deface these limbs, I journey upward and my way hither from eternal agony I trace :	37
And if God does such favour on me lay by granting of His grace, that I may see His Courts forsaken in this evil day,	40
Do not conceal your name in life from me, but tell it and inform me if I go aright,—your words shall then my escort be."	43
" A Lombard was I, Marco named ; to know the world I learned and loved that virtue well for which each one has now unbent his bow.	46
Here, to ascend, you move aright." So fell his words, and then he added, " Pray for me, I now beseech you when in heaven you dwell."	49
Then I replied, " I pledge me faithfully to do as you desire. But still one doubt will burst me if I do not speak it free :	52
First it was single, now it is spun out to double by your converse which makes sure what I have learned from you and those without.	55
For all the world of virtue is so poor as you have told me,—so o'ershadowèd, and has such various evil to endure,	58
Fain would I to the cause by you be led that I may see and show it, for some say it is from earth, some from the stars o'erhead."	61
"Ah," cried he, choked with grief that on him lay, and then began, " Brother, the world is blind and from the midst of it you take your way.	64
You, who are living, every cause will bind upon the stars, as if you would pretend all motions by their influence are designed.	67
If it were so, within you were an end of all free-will, nor were there a clear way to joy o'er good, or grief on ills to spend.	70
Our impulses come thence,—not all, I say, but though I said it, light is given whereby both good and evil we may well assay.	73

P U R G A T O R I O

And free-will is acknowledged : manfully	76
if with these obdurate planets it has striven,	
well nurtured, it will gain full victory.	
For you are subjects of a greater heaven	79
and better nature, which the dower of mind,	
uncompassed by the stars, to you has given.	
So, if the purpose of the world you find	82
astray, you are the cause,—it rests with you.	
thus let me be the guide to you assigned.	
Forth from His hands who, ere her being, knew	85
and loved her, as a little infant shows	
who weeps and babbles even as children do,	
The tender fragile soul that nothing knows	88
save that as from a happy Maker sprung,	
she turns to things which happiness disclose.	
At first a little sweetness greets her tongue	91
beguiling her, and she follows eagerly	
if from it by no curb can she be wrung.	
Whence was it meet that laws, like reins, should lie	94
to guide men, and a King, too, able alone	
the tower of the true city to descry.	
Laws are there : but who sees to them ? Not one ;	97
because the shepherd chews the cud alway	
although the cloven-hoof he does not own.	
By which the people,—all who own his sway,	100
seeing him keen to gain what he desires,	
follow him, feeding, and seek no other way.	
Clear is it evil leadership inspires	103
the wickedness of earth, not your own heart	
corrupted or derived from evil sires.	
Rome, who has made the good world by her art,	106
was wont to bear two suns who lit the way	
both on the world's side and on God's own part.	
The one has drowned the other. None can say	109
which is the Sword and which the Crozier, thus	
mingled together, both must go astray.	
For, joined like this, neither is anxious	112
nor fears the other. If you doubt, scan well	
the crop,—by it the seed is known to us.	

P U R G A T O R I O

- Valour and Courtesy were wont to dwell . 115
 between the Adige and the banks of Po
 ere Frederick on opposition fell :
- Now safely through these regions can he go 118
 who for shame-facedness had ceased to speak
 with good men and all worthy friends to know.
- Three seniors still, in whom the old times seek 121
 to battle with the new, live on below
 longing for God's dawn of new life to break.
- Corrado da Palazzo, Gherardo 124
 the good and also Guido da Castel
 whom as ' the simple Lombard ' Frenchmen know.
- The Church of Rome, as we can plainly tell 127
 by mixing thus her powers, has fallen in the mire
 and soiled the burden that she bore as well."
- " Oh, Marco," cried I, " much do I admire 130
 your reasoning and now I see aright
 why Levi's sons no heritage might acquire.
- Who is Gherardo, he, who, in despite 133
 of barbarous times, as an example lives,
 for their reproach, of what is good and right ? "
- " Either your speaking tempts me or deceives," 136
 he said, " for you speak Tuscan, yet that tongue
 to you no knowledge of Gherardo gives !
- I know him by no other name among 139
 my friends,—unless his daughter Gaia's. Now
 God with you. I can go no further along.
- See yon white light rising the smoke below, 142
 I must be gone. There stands an angel there
 who must not see me." So he turned to go
- Nor paused aught further from my lips to hear. 145

PURGATORIO CANTO XVII

Reader, if ever on an Alpine height 1
 a mist has gathered round through which you see
 as, through its skin alone, the mole has sight,
 Remember how, through that humidity 4
 which gradually dissolves, the pale round sun
 shows slowly with a faint debility.
 With such thoughts will your fancy lightly run 7
 to picture how I saw the sun once more
 first when his daily round was all but done.
 So measuring my footsteps that they bore 10
 close to my faithful Guide's, I left the cloud
 to meet his rays thrown dead on the level shore.
 Oh Fantasy with which we are endowed !— 13
 that takes us captive so that we know nought
 although a thousand trumpets blow aloud,
 What moves thee if the senses have not brought 16
 their tribute ? Surely 'tis a heavenly light
 self-kindled or by Will Almighty taught !
 Then there appeared within my fancy's sight 19
 the traces of her crime who suffered change
 into the bird that song doth most delight.
 Then did my mind so perfectly estrange 22
 itself from everything that lay around,
 that nought from outside came within its range.
 Another picture then my fancy found, 25
 one crucified, who fiercely as he died
 disdained the cross whereon his limbs were bound.
 Ahasuerus watched and at his side 28
 Esther his wife and Mordecai just,
 whose faithful deed his word accompanied.
 And as this fancy broke, like the thin crust 31
 of some frail bubble, when the water fails,
 whereof 'tis made, before the wind's faint gust,
 Then in my vision rose a maid with wails 34
 of sorrow, clamouring to her mother, " Queen,"
 she cried, " to die for anger, what avails ?

PURGATORIO

- You died to keep Lavinia, I have been 37
 lost, too, but I am she who sadlier mourns
 your fate than all the ruin I have seen."
- Then, as sleep breaks, when sudden brightness burns 40
 upon our eyelids closed, and, as it dies,
 quivers a moment ere our sense returns,
- So with my dreams and pictured fantasies 43
 when a great light fell full upon my face,
 brighter than our experience supplies,
- I turned to mark the nature of the place : 46
 when came a voice. " Here you may mount," it said :
 that sound of other wishes left no trace
- And my desire as keen it rendered 49
 to see the speaker as a wish that knows
 no rest until it be accomplished.
- As when the sun with splendour overflows 52
 our powers of sight and hides in bright excess,
 so there I seemed my strength and power to lose.
- " It is a spirit divine that bids us press 55
 upwards, nor waits our prayer, but conceals
 himself in his own dazzling loveliness.
- To us he acts as with himself man deals, 58
 for he who waits on prayer and sees the need,
 already to deny his spirit steels.
- Then let us turn our feet where he would lead. 61
 let us endeavour, ere the night comes on
 to ascend, else, not till dawn can we proceed."
- So spoke my Guide, and we together won 64
 a stairway with our eager feet, and there,
 as I close up to the first step had gone,
- I felt as if a wing had moved the air 67
 and fanned my face, "*Beati pacifici*,"
 a voice said, " who in anger have no share."
- Now the last rays of evening we could see 70
 that come before the falling of the night,
 as stars shone out above us peacefully.
- " Why, oh my strength, do you desert me quite ? " 73
 I said within myself, as all their store
 of power my limbs gave up in piteous plight.

PURGATORIO

Then stood we where no longer upward bore the stairway, and were stranded as a keel that rests itself imbedded in the shore.	76
I looked for aught that might itself reveal by sound in this new Circle: then I leant towards my Guide with this renewed appeal:	79
"Say, O sweet Master," said I, "who are sent for cleansing to this Circle. Give not o'er your speech because of this impediment."	82
Then he to me, "This Circle does restore duty foregone, linked with the love of good, and here is plied anew the tardy oar.	85
That this may be more plainly understood, turn you your mind to me and you may find some benefit has from our stay accrued."	88
Then he began, "No creatures in their kind nor the Creator are devoid of love, natural or of the spirit:—in your mind	91
You know this well. The natural love will prove unerring. Oft the other wanes or burns too fiercely, or to baser ends will rove.	94
While to the primal good its force it turns or by the secondary good is stayed, with no immoderate desire it yearns.	97
But when it turns to evil and has made too swift or else too slow a course towards good, creature against Creator is arrayed.	100
Hence you will see that love in every mood is the prime seed of virtue and of deeds whose punishment has rightfully ensued.	103
Love cherishes the thing whereon it feeds and guards its safety, wherefore it is plain no passion truly to self-hatred leads.	106
And since no being truly can remain apart from Prime Existence, so no hate of Him can any being entertain.	109
So rests it, if I this division state aright, 'tis others' evil which is loved by man's clay in three manners separate.	112

PURGATORIO

- There is whose pride so arrogant has proved 115
that he desires another's fall—to rise
and shine above his rival so removed.
- Then he who fears the loss of dignities, 118
seeing another raised to honoured place,
grows sad with envious passion for the prize.
- And thirdly, he who keenly feels disgrace 121
in being wronged and seeks with such a greed
revenge, that he will violence menace.
- This triple form of love is mourned indeed 124
below, but I would have you know of love
which tends towards good, but with deficient speed.
- Each one feels dimly that he ought to move 127
towards some good he feels will bring him rest
and this does every one attempt to prove.
- And should your love be slow upon the quest 130
to see and find, this Circle is designed
through penitence and pain to form its test.
- And yet another good remains behind, 133
not happiness nor the essence where-within
the fruit and root of all good is confined.
- Love, which too keenly tries this good to win, 136
in Circles three above us mourns. These three
now to distinguish I shall not begin,
- For these by your own eyes you soon will see." 139

PURGATORIO CANTO XVIII

So ended my high Teacher and intent 1
he gazed upon my countenance, as though
to learn if I were with his words content.
And I, with new impatience aglow, 4
outwardly silent, said, within my mind,
'Perchance my questionings do irksome grow.'
But that truth-loving father who divined 7
the timid thought that was not uttered
by speaking let me power of speaking find.
I said, "Oh Master, so your light has shed 10
its radiance on me that I clear discern
the sense and reason of all that you have said.
Therefore, sweet Father dear, I fain would learn 13
from you Love's definition, for you find
in it the seeds of good and ill in turn."
"Direct," he said, "the keen eyes of your mind 16
towards me and soon their errors will be shown
who act as but blind leaders of the blind.
The soul created is to loving prone, 19
impressionable to all pleasing things
when by that pleasure into action thrown.
Your apprehension from the real brings 22
a fixed impression and unfolds it, while
your mind its vision on the picture flings.
If it lean towards the picture with a smile, 25
that act is love,—'tis nature bound in you
that cannot from its pleasure then resile.
Then, as the fire still mounts in order due 28
because its form is fashioned to ascend
where its materials it can best renew,
So the attracted heart does ever tend 31
towards desire, which of the spirit is,
restless till it in love's rejoicing end.
So may you now see how they think amiss 34
and truth is hidden from them who suppose
all love is laudable and ends in bliss,

P U R G A T O R I O

- Since matters which its objects may compose 37
 ever seem good : not every seal is good
 though it upon good wax we may impose.”
- “ My mind, that has your reasoning understood 40
 in these your words, has made Love clear to me :
 yet doubtings still about my spirit brood.
- For, if Love offered from without us be 43
 and our souls walk with it in equal stride,
 crooked or straight, no merit can I see.”
- Then he, “ So far as reason can decide 46
 I can explain : beyond you still must wait
 on Beatrice,—such things in faith abide.
- Each form substantial, which is separate 49
 from matter and united with it, does
 in it specific virtue collocate
- Invisible, save when in act it shows 52
 and only is in its effects declared,
 as life in the green leaves of herbage blows.
- Therefore we never know from whence has fared 55
 the knowledge of our first conceptions, nor
 why we love things for which we most have cared.
- These are our instincts, as the bee’s to store 58
 her honey. As regards this primal Will,
 there is no praise or blame to struggle for.
- That to it all be joined and all fulfil 61
 the end, comes innate counsel to defend
 the threshold of assent to good or ill.
- This is the principle on which depend 64
 the reasons of your merit, as you may
 good loves from bad have winnowed in the end.
- Those, who to reasoning’s depths had worked their way,
 clearly perceived this innate liberty 68
 and left the ‘ Ethics ’ which we read to-day.
- Therefore suppose that from necessity 70
 all loves arise enkindled in your mind,
 the choice is yours their power to deny.
- Free-Will ‘ The Noble Virtue ’ is designed 73
 by Beatrice : recall what I have said
 when chance to speak with her of this you find.”

P U R G A T O R I O

- The Moon, belated, near to midnight shed 76
a light that paled the stars about her hung,
flaming like cresset, all illuminèd
- As she her light from the Sun's pathway flung, 79
where Romans watch him falling in the sea
Corsican and Sardinian peaks among.
- That noble shade, from whose ability 82
Mantuan Pietola is most renowned,
had dropped the burden laid on him by me.
- When I had answers to my questions found 85
so openly and plainly, I stood by
like one who wanders half in slumber drowned.
- But this half-slumber vanished suddenly, 88
ta'en from me by the sight of some who, then
approaching from behind our backs, drew nigh.
- Like the loud rout that, streaming through their glen 92
Ismenus and Asopus saw by night
when Thebans sought for Bacchus once again,
- So, round that Circle, in a quickening flight 94
came those, who to my eyes seemed, every one,
urged on by love of what was just and right.
- They soon were close, continuing to run 97
all in a crowded multitude, and two
shouting in tears in front of them had won :
- " Mary in haste to the hill country flew : " 100
" Caesar to win Ilerda, stung Marseilles
and, racing on, to Spain his army drew."
- " Haste, haste, for little now slow love avails, 103
let not our time be lost," cried all that host :
" to win back grace, our eagerness prevails."
- " O race, whose fervour keen now pays the cost, 106
perchance, of negligence and cold delay
in well-doing in time now past and lost,
- This soul who lives,—no falsehood do I say,— 109
would fain ascend where shines again the Sun :
tell us where lies the opening of the way."
- My Guide addressed these words to them and one 112
among those hastening shades cried, " Come you, too,
behind us : so the pathway may be won.

P U R G A T O R I O

- So filled are we with fervour to pursue 115
 our course, we cannot stay : therefore believe
 to duty not to rudeness is it due.
- As Abbot of San Zeno did I live 118
 beside Verona ; Barbarossa's sway
 then held, for whom till now, does Milan grieve.
- And one already, in the grave does lay 121
 one foot, who yet will o'er that Abbey mourn
 even for the power that once he could display.
- For he has put his own son, basely born, 124
 deformed in all his body,—worse in mind,
 where a loved pastor had the mitre worn."
- If more of this his speech remained behind 127
 I know not, he so swiftly raced along,
 but this I gladly in my memory find.
- Then he, in all my wants my succour strong, 130
 said, " Turn you hither : see these two who flee
 putting a bit upon their sloth's deep wrong."
- The last ones cried, " The folk for whom the sea 133
 opened, had all of them died long before
 the Jordan banks saw their posterity."
- And " Lo, the people, who succumbed nor bore 136
 the labours of Æneas to the end,
 were to inglorious living given o'er."
- Then, when these shades so far-off seemed to wend 139
 that from our sight they faded, in my breast
 new thoughts began to waken and extend.
- And others rose, each different from the rest : 142
 and, as I through these fantasies and schemes
 wandered, my eyes closed in the rambling quest,
- And thought became transmuted into dreams. 145

PURGATORIO CANTO XIX

In that dim hour when all the heat of day 1
 is quenched by earth or Saturn and no more
 can serve to warm the cold Moon on her way,
 And as though traced by geomancer's lore 4
 Fortuna Major, in the East ere dawn,
 arises, light from shadow to restore,
 There came to me in dream a woman, drawn 7
 crosswise her squinting eyes, her speech tongue-tied,
 crook'd feet, maimed hands and all of colour wan.
 I gazed upon her, and my glance supplied, 10
 as the sun's heat to limbs all chilled by night,
 some comfort and her tongue re-vivified :
 Then, in a little time she stood upright 13
 and o'er her pallid face the colour spread
 that Love himself evolves for his delight.
 As soon as she her speech recoverèd, 16
 she fell to singing and with difficulty
 could I from her fair presence turn my head.
 " I am," she said, " the Siren sweet whose cry 19
 leads mariners aside on the mid sea,
 so full of luring tunefulness am I.
 I drew Ulysses from his course to me 22
 with this my song :—who will with me abide
 leaves me not oft, so satisfied is he."
 Not yet her mouth was closed when at my side 25
 a saintly dame appeared with active tread
 who her to throw into confusion tried.
 " O Virgil, Virgil, who is this ? " she said, 28
 with rising anger : and he came, his eye
 upon that honest Lady fastenèd.
 She seized the other, tore her draperies 31
 and showed to me her belly whence there came
 a stench that waked me from my reveries.
 I turned my eyes, and Virgil, " Thrice your name 34
 at least have I now called. Arise and try
 to find the place where we may entry claim."

P U R G A T O R I O

Upright I rose, for all the Mount on high 37
 and all its circling rings were full of light :
 behind us glowed a new Sun from the sky.

As him I followed like some pensive wight 40
 bent down with thinking and whose form is bowed
 like to a bridge's arch for half its height,

A low voice said, " Here entry is allowed," 43
 uttered in tones more gentle and benign
 than from the speech of mortal could have flowed.

With wings outspread, that seemed like swans' to shine,
 the speaker turned us to the path that led 47
 upward, cleft through the hard wall's rocky line.

These wings he moved, and fanned us as he said 49
 "*Qui lugent* blessed are, for they shall be
 within their souls for ever comforted."

" What ails you, why do you so constantly 52
 gaze on the ground ? " my Guide began to say
 when under us the angel we could see.

Then answered I, " Such apprehensions weigh 55
 upon me from a vision that has bent
 my mind to it and will not fade away."

" Saw you that ancient witch through whom lament 58
 those next above us ? Saw you how man may
 escape from her and frustrate her intent ?

Enough for you : " he said, " spurn the earth's clay, 61
 look only on the lure the Eternal King
 swings round Him in the mighty spheres alway."

Even as the falcon first contemplating 64
 his feet, turns quickly at the call, then wide,
 with prospect of his quarry, spreads his wing,

I was : and so far as the rocks divide 67
 to yield a way to him who mounts on high,
 I went, to where I reached the Circle's side.

Then saw I the Fifth Circle open lie, 70
 and all about it weeping shades I saw
 throwing themselves to earth despairingly.

' *Adhaesit pavimento anima* 73
mea ' I heard them cry with sighs so deep
 scarce could I meaning from the sentence draw.

PURGATORIO

- "O ye, elect of God who, while you weep 76
 from Hope and Justice feel your lot less hard,
 direct me where we may ascend this steep."
- "If you from our prostrations are debarred 79
 and wish at once to find the rightful way,
 let your right hands be still your outward guard."
- In words like these did the great poet pray, 82
 and thus, in front of us, the answer rose
 in which I studied that which latent lay.
- I turned my eyes then to my Lord who chose 85
 to favour me with signs of glad assent
 to what my eager wish seemed to propose.
- When I could go to where my wishes bent, 88
 I came above that creature who, before,
 had caused me to observe his words' intent,
- Saying, "Oh shade whose weeping more and more 91
 matures that, wanting which, none God can see,
 leave for my sake that which you must deplore.
- Who were you? Tell me why thus prone you be 94
 and say if you would have me ought obtain
 from whence, alive, this road was ta'en by me."
- Then he, "Why heaven should thus our backs ordain 98
 to be upturned,—first, *Scias quod ego*
fui successor Petri,—will explain.
- Down between Siestri and Chiavari, slow 100
 winds a fair stream, and from the name it bears
 the title of my race is known to flow.
- Scarce o'er a month I felt the weight and cares 103
 which the great Mantle brings to him who tries
 to keep it pure. All else like down appears.
- Late my conversion was, alas! but wise, 106
 because I as Rome's Pastor, when I knew
 the life I lived was but a life of lies,
- Found that the heart therein attained not to 109
 its rest, nor could one higher rise therein,
 wherefore towards this my aspiration drew.
- Till then a wretched soul parted by sin 112
 from God I was, plunged all in love of gain
 which served for me this punishment to win.

P U R G A T O R I O

- The punishment of avarice is plain 115
 from those down-beaten shades upon this mount :
 there is no trial full of sorer pain.
- For, as our eyes would hold of no account 118
 the higher things, fixed on the earth below,
 behold thus fastened to the earth our front.
- As avarice quenched our love for good, even so 121
 our efforts were all lost, and in this place
 we the restraining bonds of Justice know.
- Bound hand and foot, and each upon his face 124
 we lie spread out and motionless, till He,
 our Lord release us of His own free grace."
- Before him I had knelt down reverently 127
 and would have spoken, when, by ear alone
 he knew what I had done and said to me :
- "Why thus to me this reverence have you done ?" 130
 and I, "My conscience me the right denies
 to stand before such dignity o'erthrown."
- "Straighten your legs, my brother, and arise," 133
 he answered. "Err not. Fellow you are of mine
 in service of one Power that o'er us lies.
- If e'er you knew that gospel-truth divine 136
 which sounds thus : *Neque nubent* : you will see
 the truth towards which my reasonings incline.
- Go you, now, therefore. Stay no more with me. 139
 you check my weeping, by which I mature
 that of which you have spoken formerly.
- A niece on earth I have, Alagia, pure 142
 and good she is, if but my family spare
 her with their ill example to allure.
- She is the only one now left me there." 145

PURGATORIO CANTO XX

I ll fights the will with one more strongly willed, 1
 and hence, against my pleasure, him to please,
 I drew the sponge from out the well unfilled.
 I moved as did my Guide, and went with ease 4
 as on a castle wall which ramparts prop
 behind the battlements composed of these
 Poor folk who, from their sad eyes, drop by drop, 7
 distil the fountains that pollute the earth,
 leaning too near the cliff's extremest slope.
 Oh, cursed be you, Wolf of ancient birth 10
 than any other beast you have more prey
 to satisfy your hunger's endless dearth !
 O stars whose circling we believe to lay 13
 its influence on conditions here below,
 when comes he who this scourge will chase away ?
 We went with steps irresolute and slow 16
 and I intent upon the shades I found
 weeping and crying in their bitter woe.
 And then, by chance, I heard a wailing sound 19
 of ' Mary sweet,' as cries in suffering sore
 a woman in the pains of travail bound.
 Then followed, ' And we learn that you were poor 22
 even by the humble Inn where you, we know,
 laid down the Sacred Burden that you bore.'
 Then, after heard I, ' Good Fabrizio, 25
 for virtue, though 'twere linked with poverty,
 riches with wickedness would you forgo.'
 To me these words so pleasing were that I 28
 came forward that I might that spirit see
 upon whose lips the sentence seemed to lie.
 Then did it speak of Nicholas, how he 31
 once to some maids a generous largess paid,
 that led in honour's path their youth might be.
 " O you who have so much of goodness said, 34
 tell me " I said, " your name, and why by you
 renewal of such praises now is made ?

P U R G A T O R I O

Some guerdon of your words may well be due 37
 when I return to end the brief career
 that does so swift its waning course pursue.”
 Then he, “ I will inform you,—not that here 40
 I hope for aid from thence, but that so quick
 ere death, the lights of grace in you appear.
 Root was I of that tree whose shadow thick 43
 lies over Christendom, and from whose boughs
 rarely, indeed, good fruit can any pick.
 But Douai, Lille, Ghent, Bruges, if strength allows, 46
 will soon take vengeance on it, and for this
 to the great Judge I lift my prayers and vows.
 Hugh Capet was I, and descended is 49
 from me each Louis and each Philip, those
 who of late years ruled France’s destinies.
 A butcher’s son of Paris, I arose 52
 when all the ancient line of Kings, save one
 in grey gown habited, came to a close,
 And found grasped tightly in my hands alone 55
 the Kingdom’s government : so powerful grown
 in riches was I and in friendships won,
 That in reward of my acquired renown 58
 to my son’s head the widowed crown was brought,
 from whom these sacred bones have all come down.
 Whilst that great dowry, Provence, had not 61
 removed the shame of this low race of mine
 it was worth little, yet no ill had wrought.
 By force and fraud began there its rapine : 64
 and for reward, Ponthieu and Normandy
 are seized, and Gascony with that design.
 When Charles led conquering hosts to Italy 67
 Conradin fell his victim, for amends :
 so too did he send Thomas back on high.
 A time I see, and not far off, that sends 70
 another Charles forth from France to spread
 more fame for him and for his kin and friends.
 No arms he bears, but holds the lance instead 73
 with which Iscariot joustèd : pointed so,
 the paunch of Florence is quick sunderèd.

P U R G A T O R I O

- Hence shall he win no land, but sin shall know 76
 and shall have shame the heavier in its fall
 for that to him such deeds no terrors show.
- The other, taken prisoner, I recall, 79
 on shipboard, bargaining for his daughter's sale
 as might a pirate for his captured thrall.
- O Avarice, what else can you entail 82
 on us, when to my race so evilly bred
 the claims of flesh and blood do not avail ?
- That past and future ills may bring less dread, 85
 the Fleur de Lys north of Alagna goes
 and, in His Vicar, Christ is captive led :
- Yea, mocked a second time by cruel foes, 88
 the gall and vinegar I see renewed
 and between living thieves his life's dark close.
- This second Pilate I behold imbued 91
 with such insatiate cruelty that within
 the Temple's gates his greedy sails intrude.
- Lord, when shall I rejoice to see begin 94
 Thy vengeance hidden which yet maketh sweet
 Thy wrath in secret waiting on such sin ?
- That which you heard me formerly repeat 97
 of her, the Holy Spirit's only bride,
 when you prayed me its meaning to complete,
- Such is the answer to our prayers supplied 100
 while it is day, but, when the night comes down,
 it is by different sounds accompanied.
- Then we repeat Pygmalion's renown 103
 as traitor, thief and parricide, made so
 by greed of gold that did his spirit drown.
- The misery of Midas too, we know, 106
 came of his greedy asking, o'er whose fate
 rightly our laughter ceases not to flow.
- Achan the madman we commemorate 109
 who stole the spoils, and Joshua's wrath renews
 its rage against him even in this state.
- Sapphira and her husband we accuse : 112
 the horse, whose fierce kicks Heliodorus knew,
 we praise : the memory we cannot lose

P U R G A T O R I O

That Polymnester Polydorus slew.	115
its infamy surrounds us. Last, we cry, 'Crassus, what savour then has gold to you?'	
Thus communing, we murmur low or high	118
according as our wish inspires to speak, now with loud voice, and now more placidly.	
While of the good we mention from daybreak	121
I spoke erstwhile: I was not all alone, but none was here near-by response to make."	
Already we had left him and had gone	124
forward, that path still striving to essay with all the strength we could rely upon:	
Sudden, like something that has fallen away,	127
I felt the Mountain shake, and deadly chill seized me like mortal at his dying day.	
Surely not Delos felt so quick a thrill	130
when there Latona made her nest to bear the lights that like two eyes the heavens fill.	
From every part a shouting we could hear.	133
my Master drew to me: "Be not afraid," he said, "while I to guide you still am near."	
Then ' <i>Gloria in excelsis Deo</i> ' said	136
by all, I understood from those who lay nearest, when they this prayer uttered.	
Anxious we stood and motionless as they,	139
the shepherds who first heard that hymn, until 'twas ended and the tremor passed away.	
Then did we journey up that holy hill,	142
gazing upon the shades who prostrate fell bemoaning their accustomed sorrows still.	
No ignorance, if truth my memory tell,	145
more strongly pressed me with a longing keen for knowledge than did mine, then, pondering well.	
Nor could I an enquirer well have been	148
by reason of our rapid pace, nor ought could I discern in all that wondrous scene.	
Therefore I went on timid, full of thought.	151

PURGATORIO CANTO XXI

The natural thirst, that never is allayed
save by that water the Samaritan
asked, that her thirst should be for ever stayed,
Burned in me, and to hasten I began
behind my Guide o'er these encumbered ways,
lamenting that just vengeance as I ran.
When lo, even as Saint Luke in Scripture says
to two who journeyed Christ appeared, from out
the Sepulchre arisen, to their amaze,
So came to us a shade gazing about
upon the souls who lay about his feet,
nor did we see him till we heard him shout
This greeting, " Brothers, God's peace I entreat
upon you." Quick we turned, and Virgil paid
the sign of salutation that is meet.
" May the true Judgment-seat, O happy shade,
that me to endless exile has ordained,
your happy destiny among the blest have made."
" How," said he, as we quickly forward strained,
" if you be shades unworthy to ascend,
have you these lofty stairs already gained ? "
Then said my Guide, " If you to signs attend
borne by my fellow, by an angel traced,
you will perceive they mark his blessed end.
But that the thread upon the distaff placed
for each by Clotho, was not drawn for him
by her whose wheel by night and day has raced,
His spirit, sister to our own, yet dim
of sight where we can see, could not have sought
these heights alone, and therefore from the rim
Of wide-mouthed Hell to guide him was I brought.
and this my mission is, and I shall lead
as far as such things can by me be taught.
But tell us, if you know the cause indeed,
why did this Mountain shake ? Why this great cry ?
down even to where it rises from the mead ? "

PURGATORIO

- Thus asking did he thread the needle's eye 37
of my desire, which even with hope alone
made my thirst burn in me less cruelly.
- Thus he began, " Nothing that is not done 40
in order due, or not by custom taught
can the religion of this Mountain own.
- Into this sphere there are no changes brought, 43
but in what heaven does for itself obtain
the cause of changes must alone be sought.
- Since hail, nor snow, nor dew, nor frost, nor rain 46
falls higher upward than the little stair
of three steps rising yonder from the plain,
- Neither thick clouds nor thinner vex the air 49
nor lightning's flash, nor Thaumás' daughter fleet
glows with her melting bow, now here, now there.
- Dry vapour raises not its parching heat 52
above those steps of which I speak to you
on which does Peter's Vicar rest his feet.
- Below that, such quick tremblings may ensue 55
from prisoned wind, I know not how, yet here
such quakings of the Mount I never knew.
- But here it trembles when a soul wins clear 58
knowing her cleansing finished, and can fly
upward. Then does this shouting reach the ear.
- And of such cleansing does the will supply 61
the only signal, filling all the soul
free to the change, with joy to wing on high.
- Before did she so will, yet heaven's control 64
countering, does her, even by desire, restrain
once drawn to sin, now towards purgation's goal.
- And I, who for five hundred years have lain 67
and more, beneath this sorrow, only now
feel free a happier threshold to attain.
- Therefore you felt the Mount shake, and hear how 70
the pious shades about it render praise
unto the Lord,—may He their flight allow."
- Thus did he speak : as higher we appraise 73
the pleasure of a draught when thirst is keen,
to tell my profit I can find no phrase.

PURGATORIO

Then my wise Guide, " I see how you have been 76
 caught in the net and how you are untwined,
 wherefore this earthquake and the shouts between.

Who were you, then, tell if you are inclined, 79
 why here you lay while all those ages rolled
 onwards ? this let me from your own words find."

" Then, when good Titus, rendered yet more bold, 82
 avenged, by aid of the Almighty King
 the wounds whence flowed the blood by Judas sold,
 The loftiest name," the spirit, answering 85
 declared, " and that which most endures, I bore
 though fame served not the boon of faith to bring.

So sweet my song that I was carried o'er, 88
 though a Tolosan, to the walls of Rome,
 equal to those who crowns of myrtle wore.

Statius they call me. Of my verses some 91
 were of the tale of Thebes, and some of great
 Achilles, though that load I brought not home.

To my poetic fire the kindling heat 94
 came from the sparks from out that flame divine
 that thousands doth with light illuminate.

I speak now of the *Æneid*,—mother mine 97
 and nurse in poetry it was. Untaught
 by it, a grain my weight would not incline.

And to have lived when Virgil lived and sought 100
 his presence, I would let another Sun
 be added ere from exile I am brought."

Virgil, when these high praises had begun 103
 turned to me with a look which ' Silence ' said.
 yet not by will alone are our acts done.

Laughter and tears so follow on the tread 106
 of what evokes them that they will not yield
 even to a will by strictest truth bestead.

I only smiled as one by signs would shield 109
 or show his meaning. Silently he gazed
 into my eyes where is the soul revealed,

And said, " As may the labour that has raised 112
 your path so far, be crowned, why has your face
 with flash of merriment my eye amazed ? "

PURGATORIO

Now, caught between them was I in that place : 115
one bade me hold my peace, the other prayed
my speech. I sighed. Quick did my Master trace
My meaning as he said, " Be not dismayed 118
at speaking. Speak : and grant him readily
the crave that he so earnestly has made."
Wherefore, " It may be, wonderingly," said I, 121
" you note my laughter, ancient shade, but now
I would yet more your powers of wonder try.
For he who guides me as I upward go 124
is Virgil,—he from whom you have acquired
the power to sing of gods and men below.
If you believe my merriment was fired 127
by other cause, dismiss that thought untrue :
it was your praise alone that smile inspired."
Already had he knelt in reverence due 130
to kiss my teacher's feet. " Do not," he said,
" brother. A shade am I, a shade are you."
Rising he said, " Now can be measurèd 133
my love for you that cannot be allayed,
when I forget that shadows are the dead,
And greet as substance what is only shade." 136

PURGATORIO CANTO XXII

The guiding angel was behind us now, 1
 who to the Sixth Round turned us and erased
 the mark that was imprinted on my brow.
 And those who long for justice he had praised 4
 as ever blessed. All his meaning clear
 in that word '*sitiunt*' alone was phrased.
 And I went on with lighter footsteps here 7
 than formerly. No labour did it seem
 these quickly moving shades to follow near.
 Then Virgil said, "That love wherein a gleam 10
 of virtue shines enkindling, spreads around
 to others if we stifle not its beam :
 So from the hour when Juvenal was found 13
 among us in Hell's Limbo, who made known
 to me your love, I have to you been bound
 By such affection as I feel to none 16
 as yet unseen : therefore these stairs will be
 shorter than if I trod their steps alone.
 Tell me, and as a friend, now, pardon me 19
 if confidence too great set loose my rein,
 and as a friend prolong our colloquy,
 How could it be your bosom could contain 22
 the vice of avarice when your diligence
 had caused you to such wisdom to attain ?"
 These words at first, as Statius marked their sense, 25
 moved him to laughter. Then he answered, "Nay,
 of love to me your words are evidence.
 True is it that full many things display 28
 false matter for our doubts, because the true
 reason is hidden from us far away.
 Your question makes me think that even you 31
 deem that I was by avarice allured
 and that my place down there to this was due.
 Avarice has tarried, be you well assured, 34
 always too far from me, and for this, I
 thousands of moons of agony have endured.

P U R G A T O R I O

Were it not for that passage true whereby	37
I set my course aright wherein you sing	
as if in anger with humanity,	
'O cursed hunger of gold, why do you bring	40
no stricter rule for human appetite ?'	
still in fierce jousts should I be tourneying.	
Then did I comprehend the truth aright	43
that human hands may open them too wide	
to spend. For this, and more, I was contrite.	
How many at their rising will abide	46
with tresses shortened from that ignorance	
that puts both sin and penitence aside !	
The action that would stay some sin's advance	49
by rushing to its opposite, here dries	
and withers both from their luxuriance.	
Therefore if I was housed with avarice	52
to cleanse me, it was for the other crime	
that to such vice in opposition lies."	
"Now when you also sing of arms what time	55
Jocasta's two-fold sorrow met in fight,"	
so spoke the chanter of bucolic rhyme,	
"Such things does Clio in your verse recite	58
as show that not yet faithful were you made	
in faith which with good deeds we must unite.	
If so, what sun or lamp dispelled the shade	61
so that thereafter, you, steering aright,	
following the Fisherman, your sail displayed ?"	
Then he replied, "You first induced my flight	64
towards Parnassus, its deep wells to drink :	
my spirit on to God you first did light.	
You were as one by night carrying a link	67
behind, which to his steps no light supplies	
but guides those following with its kindly blink.	
When you proclaimed among your prophecies	70
the world renewed, Justice, and man's first age	
returned, and, lo, a new race from the skies.	
Through you did I become a poet sage,	73
through you a Christian,—that these lines show clear,	
to colour them my hand I will engage.	

P U R G A T O R I O

Know that already did the world appear 76
 pregnant with the true faith, sown by those true
 apostles of the Eternal, far and near.
 And these great words which I have learnt from you 79
 seemed in such concord with the preacher's text
 that near, to visit them, I often drew.
 So holy did I deem their persons, next, 82
 that with their wailings would I mix my tears
 when them Domitian's cruel torments vexed.
 I, while on earth I lingered all those years, 85
 succoured them, for their righteous ways and deeds
 raised that one sect so far above their peers.
 Ere; in my poem, to the river meads 88
 of Thebes I brought the Greeks, I was baptised
 a secret Christian,—fear my pardon pleads,—
 A Pagan still I would be recognised. 91
 for this lukewarmness round the Circle, there
 speeding, I was four hundred years chastised.
 You, therefore, who to me have thus laid bare 94
 that greatest good of which my words have told.
 while time enough is ours to mount the stair
 O tell me where is Terence, famed of old, 97
 where Plautus, Varro, and Caecilius ?
 if damned, where are their suffering shades enrolled ? ”
 “ All these,” my Master said, “ with Persius, 100
 and me, and many more, are with that Greek
 to whom the Muses were most generous
 Of nurture. Them in that dark Limbo seek. 103
 and of that sacred Mount whereon abide
 our foster-mothers, often do we speak.
 Euripides and Antiphon reside 106
 with us, Simonides and Agathon
 and many Greeks with laurel dignified.
 Deiphyle and Argia, well known 109
 through you, are there, and, with Antigone,
 Ismenè, she who had so mournful grown :
 There she who did to Langia show the way, 112
 Tiresias' daughter there and Thetis too :
 with Deidamia do her sisters stay.”

P U R G A T O R I O

- Now both the poets ceased to speak, the view 115
 expanding round them as they gazed, now stayed
 from climbing up these rocky bastions through.
- Four of the day's handmaidens now had paid 118
 their service, and the fifth stood by the pole
 guiding aloft its horn in fire arrayed.
- Then said my Guide, "To reach our destined goal
 meseems that we must keep upon our right 122
 this edge of rock as we have done the whole."
- Such custom was our guidance,—fearless quite 124
 and never doubting,—did we climb, led on
 by that good spirit to ascend the height.
- As these two souls in front of me had gone, 127
 I followed solitary, yet their speech
 on poesy my ear and intellect won.
- But soon that converse sweet of each to each 130
 was broken, as a tree in the mid way
 appeared with fragrant fruit within our reach.
- Even as a pine-tree lessens its display 133
 of foliage, tapering upwards, so this grew
 inverse. To climb its stem none might essay.
- And, on the other side, came into view 136
 a clear spring falling from the rock on high
 that bathed the lower leafage with its dew.
- The two great Poets to this tree came nigh, 139
 and from within its leaves there came a call,
 "Food like my fruit you must yourselves deny."
- Then cried it, "Mary in the wedding-hall 142
 thought more of how the guests should be supplied
 than of what might to her own lips befall,
- Which now speak here. No Roman matron sighed
 for ought but water. Daniel wisdom gained 146
 putting the rich meats of the King aside.
- Golden was that first Age, when nuts attained 148
 savour from hunger, and the limpid flood
 as nectar met parched lips towards it strained.
- Honey and locusts were the Baptist's food 151
 in the bare desert: so has glory due
 and greatness to his memory accrued,
- As in the Gospel is revealed to you." 154

PURGATORIO CANTO XXIII

While through the tree's green branches I had thrown
my peering sight as he, who in pursuit
of bird's life to destroy it, wastes his own,
My more than father said, "Son, to our route
we must address ourselves: the time we have
we must to more advantage distribute."
Then did I turn my face and step where grave
and wise, these sages spoke, so that each word
a costless pleasure to my journey gave.
And then in tears and song a hymn was heard
and ' *Labia mea Domine* ' arose
so that both grief and joy to life were stirred.
"Sweet Father," I began, "say who are those
whose music charms me?" "These," he said, "are they
who loose the bands of debt that round them close."
As thoughtful travellers, meeting on the way
some whom they know not, turn about to gaze,
but do not, for this cause their footsteps stay,
So, from behind, more rapid in their pace
o'ertaking us, and passing, came a throng
of shades devout who used no spoken phrase.
The eyes of each with hollow gloom were hung,
their faces pale, so haggard that the skin
tight to the moulding of the cheek-bones clung.
Nor do I dream that Erisichthon's sin
brought him such expiation, when in dread
of hunger he was wasted all and thin.
"These must be they," within my mind I said,
"who, mad with hunger, lost Jerusalem
when on her child the woman Mary fed."
Each eye seemed like a ring without its gem
and those who read an OMO in the face
of men would there distinguish but the M.
Who, ignorant, would imagine that their case
arose from that alluring fruit and spring,
raising desires that on them left this trace ?

P U R G A T O R I O

Already deep I wondered at this thing 37
 that seemed the cause of their pale meagreness
 and of the scurf that did about them cling,
 When lo, from out his hollow front's recess 40
 a shade cast eyes on me, and with stern gaze
 cried out, "What grace here lessens my distress?"
 Never should I have known him by his face, 43
 but from his voice did recognition flow
 that his changed countenance had served to erase.
 From this sole spark was sudden lit the glow 46
 of memory, and in that face so marred
 I did the features of Foresè know.
 "Oh, do not gaze on that which has so scarred 49
 my skin," he prayed, "nor at the blots which blight
 my flesh, that on your pitying eyes has jarred.
 But tell me truth about yourself. Tell right 52
 who these are that walk with you. Do not stay
 silent with me : some converse I invite."
 "Your face," I said, "which once upon a day 55
 I wept in death, now more for pity cries
 and tears,—such awful change does it display.
 So, in God's name, declare what agonies 58
 have stripped you thus, and do not bid me speak,
 for he speaks ill whose mind in wonder lies."
 Then he to me, "In yonder water seek 61
 the virtue fallen from the Eternal Mind,
 and in that tree, whence I am wan and weak.
 All these, whose song with weeping is combined, 64
 in hunger and thirst their souls here purify
 from greed to which they were too much inclined.
 This fruit's sweet scent, wafted as we go by, 67
 and this fresh spray which falls upon the leaves
 our spirits do with longing sorely try.
 Not only once our mind this pain receives 70
 circling this path,—pain do I say? 'Twould be
 more just to say this wish our pain relieves.
 And this desire draws us towards the tree 73
 and the glad Christ who 'Eli' cried, what time
 His blood the souls of men from sin set free."

PURGATORIO

I answered, " Since, Foresè, for this clime 76
 of better life you changed the lower sphere,
 not five years yet have passed. If from the slime
 Of further sin your soul was thus made clear 79
 before the hour of holy penitence,
 whose sorrow to the Almighty brings us near,
 How have you here arrived? For, far from hence 82
 I should have thought to find you where delay
 of due contrition finds its recompense."
 Then he, " Thus quickly have I ta'en my way 85
 to drink of the sweet wormwood of this pain
 by tears through which did she,—my Nella,—pray.
 Her pious sighs and prayers have wrought my gain 88
 and led me from the borders where await
 those souls, this higher region to attain.
 My widow, loved by me in my first state, 91
 is dearer and more pleasing in God's sight
 for that in her good works she has no mate.
 The women of Barbagia are less light— 94
 there, in Sardinia,—than those she sees
 within our own Barbagia day and night.
 Oh my sweet brother, what shall I say of these? 97
 and yet within my mind's eye is a day
 not long beyond when this our hour shall cease,
 When preachers shall their prohibition lay 100
 on those unblushing dames whose shameless dress
 through Florence does, to all, their breasts display.
 What Moor or Saracen would e'er transgress 103
 so flagrantly, or need to be restrained
 by Church or civil power from shamelessness?
 Ah, but if these unblushing creatures gained 106
 a foresight of what heaven has quick prepared
 for them, their throats in howling would be strained.
 For, if my prescience fail not, ere his beard 109
 has grown who now is lulled on nurse's breast,
 to retribution shall they all have fared.
 But look, my brother, hear my slight request, 112
 and hide no more yourself. See how all gaze
 to where the Sun's ray by you does not rest."

PURGATORIO

- Then I, "If you recall what in those days 115
I was to you and you to me, I fear
that memory no pleasant thoughts will raise.
From such a life he, my Conductor, there 118
turned me: 'twas but the other day when you
could still behold in heaven his sister dear,"
(I pointed at the Sun.) "He leads me through 121
the deeps of night and from the truly dead:
still in this flesh the journey I pursue.
His guidance and his comforts have me led 124
upward and round about this Mountain steep
where your world-twisted forms are straightened.
So long he vows my company to keep 127
till I shall be where Beatrice abides,
and then, alas, I must his absence weep.
Virgil is he who this to me confides" 130
(I pointed to him) "and that other shade
is he for whom the Mountain on all sides
Trembled and shook,—so his farewell was paid." 133

PURGATORIO CANTO XXIV

Neither our speech delayed our pace, nor it 1
 hindered our talking, but with converse free
 we went like ship that on fair wind has hit :
 And all the shades, that seemed twice dead to be, 4
 drew through the caverns of their hollow eyes
 amaze at sight of my vitality.
 Continuing the course of my replies, 7
 I said, " Perchance his progress is more slow
 for his sake who beside him upwards hies.
 Tell, if you know, where is Piccarda now ? 10
 and if, among this people who so stare
 on me, is any one whom I should know ? "
 " My sister," said he, " whether she more fair 13
 or more devout I know not, triumphs sweet
 on high Olympus, and her crown doth wear."
 Then added he, " Here it is not unmeet, 16
 but lawful, to address by name each shade
 whose change, by abstinence is so complete.
 This," (pointing with his finger) then he said, 19
 " is Buonagiunta, he of Lucca. That
 beyond, so more than others withered,
 Holding the Church within his arms has sat. 22
 he came from Tours, and purges now in pain
 Bolsena's eels and wine that made him fat."
 Many another did he name, and fain 25
 they seemed of recognition, none
 scowled on him or desired him to refrain.
 There Ubaldino dalla Pila, one 28
 who champed the empty air, and Boniface
 under whose staff full many a flock had gone,
 Messer Marchese, too, I saw, who space 31
 once had for drinking with less thirst than now,
 at Forli, yet with it could not keep pace.
 But as one's gaze may more familiar show 34
 to one 'mong many, towards the Luccan I
 turned, as he seemed my features best to know.

PURGATORIO

He murmured something then confusedly 37
 that sounded like "Gentucca" issuing
 from where these wounds of Justice seemed to lie.
 "Oh, shade," cried I, "who seem endeavouring 40
 to speak with me, speak, so that I may hear
 more clearly,—comfort to us both 'twill bring."
 "There is a woman born who doth not wear 43
 as yet the wimple," cried he, "who to you
 will make my town a pleasure, though men dare
 To censure it. With this prediction true 46
 go forth : for though my mumbled words are ta'en
 not rightly, facts the truth will surely show.
 But tell me if I speak with him whose strain, 49
 '*Ladies to whom Love's mind is known aright,*'
 starts in our poetry a newer vein."
 "When Love," I answered, "does my heart incite, 52
 lo, I am one who notes what Love dictates,
 and in the fashion that he speaks, I write."
 "Brother," he said, "now know I what abates 55
 the Notary, Guittone and me from use
 of that sweet style your genius creates.
 Well now I see your pens do nothing lose 58
 of what that great Dictator speaks,—alas !
 that fashion for our rhyme we did not choose.
 And he who tries beyond this bound to pass 61
 loses all sense of difference in style."
 he ceased as one who now contented was.
 As birds, that winter by the banks of Nile, 64
 at times form into squadrons in the air,
 then stream apart flying in long-drawn file,
 So all the crowd of people that were there, 67
 turning their faces, hurried on their way
 quick with good-will, while hunger made them spare.
 And as a runner, panting, falls away 70
 from his companions till his breath he gain
 and he the burden on his breast can stay,
 So did Foresè from that flock remain 73
 behind, and following by my side, he said,
 "When shall it be I meet you once again ?"

P U R G A T O R I O

- " I know not," said I, " when I shall be dead, 76
 but yet I shall return no sooner here
 than my desire shall to this coast have sped.
 For that place where I lived from year to year 79
 becomes more stripped of every goodly thing,
 and soon seems doomed in woe to disappear."
 " Go, now," he said, " for him round whom doth cling
 that guilt, I see dragged at a wild-beast's tail 83
 to where sin meets with endless suffering.
 The beast goes fast and faster on his trail 85
 at every step, until his corpse it flings
 disfigured to the ground. But I my tale
 Can tell no further, yet those heavenly rings" 88
 (he raised his eyes above,) " shall not revolve
 for long till you shall know of all these things.
 But stay you here behind, for my resolve 91
 to linger at your pace when time is, here
 so precious, does too much of loss involve."
 As a keen horseman from his troop rides clear 94
 at gallop to attain to the renown
 of being the first bold adventurer,
 So went he from me with his strides wide-thrown, 97
 and I remained together with those two,
 the greatest Leaders that the world has known.
 And when thus, far in front of us he flew 100
 and my sight followed him as eagerly
 as did my intellect his words pursue,
 Behold, in front of me another tree 103
 appeared with laden boughs and foliage green,
 suddenly, as I turned, in front of me.
 And under it a company was seen 106
 lifting their hands with shouting to the tree
 like greedy children for indulgence keen
 Who beg : and one their importunity 109
 meets not with words, but heightens their desire
 by holding up the prize for them to see.
 Then, as though undeceived, did they retire : 112
 close came we to those boughs which had denied
 that to which their entreaties did aspire.

P U R G A T O R I O

- 'Pass on, nor you by this tree abide,— 115
 further, there stands the tree of which Eve ate :
 this is a sapling taken from its side."
- So, from the boughs, a voice articulate 118
 spoke, yet unknown, and Virgil, Statius
 and I did not our onward course abate.
- "Remember," said the voice, "those infamous 121
 beings, cloud-born, who satiated ran
 with double breasts to fight with Theseus :
- Think of the Hebrews, who, by Gideon's plan 124
 for their soft drinking were by him denied
 when he came down the hills to Midian."
- Thus we passed onward keeping to one side 127
 hearing more tales of gluttons overfed,
 which nought but miserable gain implied.
- Then on the wider pathway were we spread 130
 apart, and for a thousand paces went
 silent, each one in thought envelopèd.
- "On what, then, is your contemplation bent, 133
 you three lone ones ? " a voice cried, startling me,
 as beasts spring from some danger imminent.
- I looked up then to see who this might be, 136
 and never glowed a furnace half so red
 or metal or glass in bright intensity
- As he who spoke. "If you will please," he said, 139
 "still to mount upwards, here a turning take,
 so go they who by hopes of peace are led."
- Dazzled in sight and fearing to forsake 142
 my Teachers, back I turned to them as they
 who shape their attitude for listening's sake.
- As, heralding the dawn, the wind of May 145
 moves all its odours sweet, impregnated
 with herb and flower along its gentle way,
- So did I feel a breeze about my head 148
 come from the fanning pinion that on me
 ambrosia and sweetest fragrance spread.
- And then I heard the words, "Blessed is he 151
 illumined by such grace that with no fire
 of greed his hungry heart can kindled be,
- But only filled with righteous desire." 154

PURGATORIO CANTO XXV

It was the hour when we could mount the height 1
freely, and to the Bull the Sun resigned
mid-day, and to the Scorpion the night.
Therefore, as one who lingers not behind 4
but hastens whatsoever he may see,
if but necessity impel his mind,
So did we enter by that cavity 7
each up the stairway singly clambering,
for the strait path compelled us so to be.
And as a little stork that lifts its wing 10
longing to fly, yet, as it hesitates
to leave the nest, drops it, nor dares the spring,
So was I, as a fire glows and abates, 13
lit with desire to ask, and moved as one
acts who the task of speaking contemplates.
My gentle Father spoke as he moved on, 16
rapidly saying, "Let your dart be shot
in words, that to the iron you have drawn."
Then thus assured, my speech suppressing not, 19
I said, "How is it here they waste away
where no one calls for feeding to be got?"
"Call but to mind how Meleager lay 22
dying," he said, "consuming, as blazed out
the burning brand, your wonder you may stay.
And if you watch your image move about 25
upon the mirror following faithfully
your postures, you will soon resolve your doubt.
But that your mind may have tranquillity, 28
lo, here is Statius whom I call and pray
that he the healer of your wounds may be."
"If I to him the eternal things display 31
which he has seen," said Statius, "and you, here,
'tis that your wish I dare not to gainsay."
Then he began, "If but my words are clear, 34
my son, and find reception in your mind,
your 'how' in larger light will disappear.

P U R G A T O R I O

The perfect blood, which you will never find drunk by the thirsty veins but cast aside as food thrown from the board is left behind,	37
Takes from the heart a virtue in its tide which flows through all our members, like in kind to that which forms them, by the veins supplied.	40
This liquor, thence digested and refined, flows down to sites of which we may not write, and meets another's blood by means designed.	43
There, one with other hastens to unite passive and active, knowing the high source from which the influence has ta'en its flight.	46
Joined, it begins to operate, its force coagulate till life comes, and, through the whole material, is infused in Nature's course.	49
From active virtue when thus formed, the soul even as a plant—though that seems but to be upon the way while this has reached its goal,—	52
By sense and motion works, as, in the sea, a fungus moves, and then begin to grow the various powers of its activity.	55
So, now, my son, the virtue spreads, we know, from out the parent's generative heart from which all living influences flow.	58
But how from out this purely animal part a thinking being comes, you know not yet nor one who was far wiser in the art,	61
Who by his doctrine would the intellect set quite separate from the soul, for that he saw no place wherein its presence could be met.	64
From off your breast all coverings withdraw to meet the truth, and know that when with brain the foetus is endowed, without a flaw,	67
The Primal Mover turns to it again, glad at the work of nature, and, therein breathes a new spirit filled with virtue's strain,	70
Which all the force it finds then draws within its substance, making thus a single soul which lives and feels, and seems around to spin	73

P U R G A T O R I O

Upon itself. And, that you may control 76
 your wonder at my words, look at the Sun
 whose heat makes wine from juice in the vine's bole.
 And when the thread of Lachesis is done, 79
 it frees itself from flesh and bears away
 its powers of human and divine in one.
 And though the other powers have nought to say, 82
 memory, intelligence and will more keen
 appear than ever at an earlier day.
 Without a stop the flying soul is seen 85
 to fall in marvellous manner on the shore,
 where first it knows what all its journeyings mean.
 Then by that place confined, its inward store 88
 of virtue formative soon radiates
 in shape, as it infused the limbs before.
 And as the air, which moisture saturates 91
 and through which sunlight passes, takes the hues
 this radiance of another light creates,
 So round the new-come soul the air renews 94
 the form which once it had, it having force
 the atmosphere with its own shape to infuse.
 Then as the fire, changing its onward course, 97
 is followed by the flame, this shape, new-made,
 follows the soul from which it has its source.
 So, as in this way is the form displayed, 100
 a shade 'tis named, and every organ shows
 with all its functions to the sight arrayed.
 Hence, here we speak and laugh and o'er our woes 103
 weep long, and heave those sighs as heard by you
 from every one who round the Mountain goes.
 According as desires their force renew 106
 and our affections urge us, shades take on
 their aspect :—to this cause your doubts are due."
 Now had we to the final turning won 109
 and, as we wheeled to right, new troubles rose
 which all our minds became intent upon.
 This bordering bank from out its surface throws 112
 a burst of flame ; and fierce wind, from the steep
 bending all backward from the margin, blows.

PURGATORIO

- Whence we behoved the narrower way to keep 115
 each behind each : on one side was the fire,
 on one, I feared, a fall into the deep.
- My Leader said : " On this path we require 118
 to keep our eyes well bridled to our need ;
 from one small slip might come disaster dire."
- Then from the flame we heard the song proceed 121
 of '*Summae Deus clementiae*,' while it blazed,
 towards which I quickly turned to pay more heed.
- Then saw I spirits walking, as I gazed, 124
 within the fire. My eyes were dropt to scan
 my steps, anon were to this vision raised.
- As the hymn reached to its allotted span, 127
 a loud voice, '*Virum non cognosco*' cried
 and then the song more soft again began.
- After, they cried, " Diana still doth hide 130
 within the wood and chases Helicè
 who with the poison of Venus has been tried."
- They turned to singing, naming openly 133
 those husbands and those wives who chaste remained
 as virtue and the marriage vow decree.
- This mode suffices while they are contained 136
 within this burning furnace's control :
 so are they cared for, by such food maintained,
- Until at last their wounds are all made whole. 139

PURGATORIO CANTO XXVI

While thus along the brink, one after one, 1
we walked, and often did the Master say
“See, let my skill avail to lead you on,”
The Sun on my right shoulder struck his ray 4
that even now was changing the blue sky
to westwards into whiteness of the day :
And in my shadow, burned more ruddily 7
those flames, so that the moving shades, intent,
noted this wonder as they passed me by.
And this gave rise to talking as they went 10
among themselves, and murmurs from them came,—
“His body is not all of shadows blent.”
Then towards me, for as far as, without blame, 13
they could advance, some of them bent towards me
careful to keep within the range of flame.
“O you who go behind them reverently, 16
and not that you may linger on the way,
answer me whom in fiery thirst you see :
Not to me only, for these others pray 19
your speech as Indians or Ethiops long
for water cool their pantings to allay.
How is it that you make a barrier strong 22
to keep the sunshine from us, as if, yet,
death’s fatal net had not been o’er you flung ?”
So one addressed me, and I would have met 25
his question and revealed my state, had not
another wonder in my way been set.
For, through the fire, approaching to that spot, 28
contrariwise, another shadowy band
appeared, and me to pause of wonder brought.
Then each to each bent, and on either hand 31
they kissed each other, and seemed satisfied
to greet each other with this welcome bland.
Even so when ants their comrades have espied 34
in brown battalions, do they rub their snouts
together, thus their way or fate to guide.

PURGATORIO

- As soon as from their momentary bouts 37
of friendly greeting had they turned, each tried
the others to surpass in clamorous shouts.
- Naming the Cities of the Plain, some cried, 40
the others, "Lo, Pasiphae in the cow
lures the young bull all lecherous to her side."
- Then as to the Rhipaeon mountains' brow 43
some cranes may fly, while others seek the sand—
these fearing frost, and those the Sun's fierce glow,—
- So did they pass, moving to either hand, 46
and, weeping sorely, they began again
the shouted cries appropriate to each band.
- Then close there came to me those who were fain 49
to question me before, as I went by.
to hear my words, towards me they seemed to strain.
- When I thus, twice, had seen the avidity 52
that filled them with desire to hear, I said,
"O souls, sure sometime of your bliss on high,
- My members, green or ripened, have not stayed 55
behind me yonder but are here with me
and every joint that with my blood is fed.
- I wander up, no longer blind to be. 58
a Lady waits for me who grace can win,
hence, through your world, comes my mortality.
- But,—that your greater wish may soon begin 61
to be obtained, and that heaven infinite,
to its unbounded love may take you in,—
- Tell me, I pray, that I the words may write, 64
who are you, and those others who appear
behind your backs pursuing now their flight?"
- No otherwise than does a mountaineer, 67
suddenly finding himself, all rough and rude,
within a town, dumbly about him peer,
- Did each shade seem in a bewildered mood. 70
but they recovered soon from their amaze
which does not long over a bold heart brood.
- "Blessed are you who come within our ways," 73
began the shade who first had questioned me,
"the holier life by trial to appraise.

PURGATORIO

Those, who have left us, that iniquity incurred, for which even Caesar triumphing was shouted at for his effeminacy.	76
The name of that lost City do they fling against themselves, as you have heard, and burn with shame that heats these flames encompassing.	79
Our sin hermaphrodite we weep in turn, for that we served not human laws, but fain would to the state of brutish beasts return.	82
And to our shame is chanted this refrain,— the name of her who in such brutish wise on her own self contracted bestial stain.	85
Now do you know our acts and infamies. if you should ask our names, no time is there nor would my knowledge serve for such replies.	88
Your wish to lessen, I my name declare,— I, Guido Guinicelli, cleansing woes here as a timely penitent must bear.”	91
Such joy as, 'mid Lycurgus' grief by those two sons who met their mother once again was felt, though to a lesser height it rose,	94
I knew within me, hearing this one deign to call himself my father and theirs, too, my betters in Love's rhymes of sweetest strain.	97
Hearing nought, silently, did I renew— gazing at him, and deep in thought,—my way though I to the fierce flames no nearer drew.	100
Then satisfied with looking, did I lay my services at his demand and swore that oath which, hardly, doubting can gainsay.	103
Then he to me, “ By what has gone before such traces have you left, that Lethè's stream cannot obliterate, or blur them o'er :	106
But if your speech and plighted word appear so true, oh, tell me why it is that you by speech and earnest look hold me so dear.”	109
And I to him, “ Your words so sweet and true, as long as modern use shall hold its sway, even will your ink with preciousness indue.”	112

PURGATORIO

- "Brother," he said, "he who upon this way 115
 goes yonder," (pointing as he spoke) "was yet
 a greater Master of the native lay.
- In prose romance, love-songs in verses set 118
 all he surpassed, nor he of Limoges gained
 such heights, though prating fools this truth forget.
- To rumour is their whole attention strained 121
 and not to fact, and such opinions grow
 in those by neither art nor knowledge trained.
- Our fathers to Guittone even did so 124
 with shout on shout giving him highest praise,
 but now his proper rank most people know.
- Now, if with you the ample privilege stays 127
 to enter to the Cloister where within
 Christ rules as Head, a 'Paternoster' raise
- Some comfort for my troubled soul to win, 130
 so far as we have need of prayers here
 where, truly, none of us have power to sin."
- Then, as if meaning to make passage clear 133
 for some one following, he, through the flame,
 like fish in water, seemed to disappear.
- Forward I went, and to his side I came 136
 to whom, before, he pointed, and I said
 how my desire gave welcome to his name.
- Then willingly, he sweetly answerèd, 139
 "Your courteous demand so pleases me,
 I cannot, nor I will not hide my head.
- Arnald I am, that weep and sing, I see 142
 within me all my madness past, and hail
 with joy the happy day that yet shall be.
- I pray you by the Power which lets you scale 145
 this stairway upward, do you keep in mind
 at times, my sufferings." Then within the pale
- Of fire he passed, by which they are refined. 148

PURGATORIO CANTO XXVII

As when the first light of the Sun prevails 1
 in lands where his Creator shed His blood,
 while Ebro flows under the lofty Scales
 And scorching noonday heats the Ganges' flood, 4
 so stood the Sun, and in the day's last hours,
 beside us, lo, God's happy angel stood.
 He showed beyond where that great furnace lowers. 7
 '*Beati mundo corde*' was his song
 chanted aloud in livelier tones than ours.
 He said, "No further can you pass along, 10
 oh sainted souls, unless the fire you brave.
 enter it, listening even the flames among."
 These were his words as we approached, that gave 13
 our footsteps pause, and I became as one
 ready to be then laid within the grave.
 Forward I leant, my claspèd hands upon, 16
 looking into the fire, and fancy wrought
 visions of men into that burning gone.
 Then my kind guides to me some comfort brought, 19
 and Virgil said, "My son, here pain may be
 as we pass through the flame, but death comes not.
 Remember, oh, remember,—formerly, 22
 if I on Geryon's back preserved you sound,
 shall I not now, when nearer God are we?
 Believe it true that in that flaming round 25
 though you a thousand years were held, no hair
 of all those on your head would scorched be found.
 And if, perchance, you dream that I prepare 28
 some trick, go forward and the trial make,
 grasping your garment's hem with anxious care.
 Put off all fear at once, and undertake 31
 to follow me, having no dread at all."
 I stood with warning conscience all awake.
 When he perceived me firm against his call, 34
 troubled a moment, "On, my son," he said,
 "'twixt you and Beatrice there stands this wall."

P U R G A T O R I O

As when poor Pyramus, then all but dead, 37
 at Thisbè's name, upon her fixed his eyes
 what time the mulberry grew from white to red,
 So, softened from my hard and obstinate guise 40
 I turned to my wise Guide, hearing that name
 that in my soul doth constantly arise.
 He shook his head, "What, on this side the flame 43
 you wish to stay?" He smiled on me as on
 some child whose mood an apple given will tame.
 Then before me, into the flame that shone 46
 he entered, and then Statius he prayed
 to follow, who between us long had gone.
 When I had passed within, I would have made 49
 my bed in molten glass to make less dire
 that heat immeasurable and unallayed.
 To comfort and support me, my sweet Sire 52
 spoke ever on of Beatrice, "Her eyes,"
 he said, "I seem already to admire."
 Beyond, a guiding voice began to arise. 55
 intent on it, we gained the further side
 close by the foot of fresh acclivities.
 From a great light, that voice "*Venite*" cried, 58
 "*benedicti patris mei.*" The light shone
 so that my eyes its glow could scarce abide.
 "The Sun sinks low," the voice said, "day is done, 61
 and evening shadows fall, haste then your pace
 ere all the glory of the West is gone."
 Straight went the pathway up the rocky face 64
 in such a manner that I stopped the light
 shot by the Sun, far sunk from his high place.
 Few were the steps we made up that steep height 67
 when I and the two Sages, from the way
 beheld my shade, with sunset, take its flight.
 And ere the sky was all one level grey 70
 throughout its boundless limits, and night rose
 over her dark dominions to hold sway,
 Each of us on a step sought for repose. 73
 this want of power to ascend, but no decrease
 in longing did the Mount on us impose.

PURGATORIO

So do goats lie in ruminating ease	76
who, ere they fed, upon the cliffs have played wanton and fleet in their activities :	
Now they lie silent while the Sun, hot-rayed,	79
shines, and the herd upon his crook-staff bent, watches them, lest they be by aught dismayed :	
Or as the shepherd, who the night has spent	82
beside his flock, guards lest some creature wild attack and scatter them on prey intent.	
Such were all three of us : I might be styled	85
the goat, and they the shepherds : in close row, on either side of us the rocks were piled.	
Little beyond them could be seen, save through	88
that gap I saw some stars that larger far and brightlier than their wont appeared to glow.	
As thus I mused and watched them star by star,	91
sleep held me, sleep that oft the import knows of things that scarcely in existence are.	
In that hour when from out the East fast rose	94
upon the Mountain Cytherea's light, that ever with the fire of passion glows,	
In dream a lovely Lady met my sight,	97
young, beautiful, and gathering on her way the flowers with which a meadow was bedight.	
She sang, "To those who wish to know, I say	100
that I am Leah, who employ my hands, gathering a garland on my head to lay.	
Here, at the glass I tire my locks' fair bands,	103
but she, my sister Rachel, all the day, contemplative before her mirror stands.	
She loves to see her beauteous eyes alway	106
as I to deck me with my fingers light, so, Thought and Action we in turn display."	
Now, ere the dawn, the waking sky grew bright	109
with promises that on the wanderer shed joy, when he feels him nearer home each night.	
The darkness passed away, and with it fled	112
my slumber from me. I arose with speed : already had my Masters left their bed.	

PURGATORIO

- “ That dulcet fruit, the search for which doth lead 115
man’s anxious care from bough to bough, this day
in peace the hungering of your soul will feed ” :
- Virgil such words to me was pleased to say, 118
and never, I believe, were gifts bestowed
on happy mortal half so sweet as they.
- Then longing upon longing overflowed, 121
and my desire still higher up to rise
fresh feathers on its eager pinions showed.
- Then, when we saw the step that highest lies 124
beneath our feet and all that lay below,
Virgil upon me gravely fixed his eyes
- And said, “ The temporal fire and that whose glow 128
is never-ending, have you seen, my son :
beyond this, nothing further do I know.
- You hither by my wit and art have won, 130
take now your pleasure for your guide, now free
you go : the steep, the narrow ways are gone,
- Look how the Sun in his refulgency 133
shines on your brow,—here, to your gladdened sight
the earth bursts forth in grass and flower and tree.
- While come those lovely eyes that, when all bright 136
with tears, brought me to help you, here you may
sit, and move ever in long-sought delight.
- Await no more my guidance on the way. 139
free are you, and your will is sound and true.
folly it were its rule to disobey.
- Over yourself I crown and mitre you.” 142

PURGATORIO CANTO XXVIII

Now keen to search within and all about the wood divine, that, with dense greenery of living shadow, shut the sunlight out, No longer did I wait, but lingeringly paced forward from the margin o'er the plain that seemed to breathe all o'er with fragrancy. A gentle breeze, that did unchanged remain, constant in its sweet blowing, struck my brow with force no greater than soft winds maintain. And all the quivering branches seemed to bow together towards the point where, first of all, the sacred Mount was wont its shade to throw : Yet not so much their tops did sideways fall but that the little birds from out the trees sang sweetly all their descants musical. With fullest gladness did they greet the breeze, first murmuring in the leaves and to their song adding the burden of its harmonies. Such is the music sweet the pines among by Chiassi's beach when Æolus sets free the wind Scirocco from his prison strong. Already had my steps, though cautiously, led me so far within that ancient wood, where I had entered there I could not see. Behold, a stream then barred me with its flood that leftward, with its dainty, rippling flow bent the green blades of grass that by it stood, And all the purest waters that we know on earth, would seem as turbid to those clear pellucid depths that all their secrets show, Even although it passes darkling here under perpetual shadow that denies the Sun or even the Moon's light to appear. I stayed my feet, but forward bent my eyes beyond the little rivulet to gaze entranced on those May-flowers of various dyes,	1 4 7 10 13 16 19 22 25 28 31 34
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P U R G A T O R I O

When suddenly, as something to amaze 37
 comes to our sight and quickly draws away
 our settled thoughts from their accustomed ways,
 I saw a solitary Lady stray 40
 singing, while culling flower after flower,
 whose various hues made all the pathway gay.
 "I pray you, Lady, who have felt the power 43
 of Love's fire, if my judgment is not wrong
 from looks which oft proclaim the heart's sweet dower,
 Please you, draw nearer," said I, "from among 46
 these flowers towards the stream, that I may hear
 more easily the burden of your song.
 For to my sight and memory you appear 49
 as Proserpine what time her mother lost
 her child, and she the first flowers of the year."
 Then, as a Lady whom one may accost 52
 amid the dance, she closely joined her feet,
 at rest, nor one before the other thrust.
 So did she seem my presence there to greet 55
 over the flowers in red and yellow drest,
 with lowered eyes as maids our glances meet.
 Thus happily she granted my request 58
 and came more close to me, so that her song
 I heard, and knew what its sweet words expressed.
 And when her feet were now almost among 61
 the grasses that were bathed by that fair brook,
 on me the guerdon of her eyes she flung.
 I deem there shone no more resplendent look 64
 from Venus' eyelids when her wayward son
 her bosom for his arrow's target took.
 She smiled on me, standing that bank upon 67
 where still she gathered flowers with dainty hand
 whose blossoms flourish though they seeds have none.
 Three paces did that stream from strand to strand 70
 divide us. On the Hellespontic sea,
 which Xerxes crossed, that still brings to a stand
 Man's pride, Leander no more angrily 73
 gazed, between Sestos and Abydos spread,
 than did I that it opened not for me.

P U R G A T O R I O

- " You are new-comers to this place," she said, 76
 " and at my smiling here, which is the nest
 chosen for all mankind and furnishèd,
 You still may feel some wonder half confessed : 79
 but the psalm '*Delectasti*' with its light
 from clouds of doubt will make all manifest.
 And you who walk in front and did invite 82
 my speech, say if ought further you would hear,
 for I shall satisfy you with delight."
 " This water," said I, " and the music clear 85
 within the wood, lead me belief to doubt
 new-formed, of what my eyes should witness here."
 She answered thus, " I know full well, from out 88
 what cause your wonder comes. Gladly will I
 disperse the mists which compass you about.
 The Highest Good, Himself to satisfy, 91
 made mankind good : that they might so remain
 He did this pledge of endless peace supply.
 Through man's default the place from him was ta'en,
 through his default, too, all the innocent play 95
 and laughter of life was changed to sweat and pain.
 In order that the storms, that rise alway 97
 beneath it, from the fumes of earth and sea,
 and follow on the heat, quick as they may,
 Might not hurt man, this Mountain rising free 100
 upwards into the firmament's higher air
 is saved from these and seems secure to be.
 Now since the air in circle, year by year 103
 revolves with primal motion, if it be
 the circle is not broken anywhere,
 The motion strikes the Mount's acclivity 106
 which stems the living air, and hence the sound
 continual in the forest's density.
 And every stricken tree thus strews around 109
 its native power, amid the impregnate wind
 that bears it to be scattered on the ground.
 And Earth, where soil and clime lag not behind 112
 this chance, conceives, and bears to light of day
 these plants and trees, each diverse in its kind.

P U R G A T O R I O

- No wonder, knowing this, would they display 115
 who see, within these bounds, each plant arise,
 though no hand seems a seed in earth to lay.
- Know this, that 'neath this holy soil there lies 118
 abundance of all seeds, and fruits are there
 that are unknown save in this Paradise.
- The waters here no hidden springs prepare 121
 condensed by cold, nor is their flow increased
 or lessened, as the rivers run elsewhere :
- But from a fountain, that has never ceased 124
 nor will, by God's decree, it outward flows
 regaining ever what has been released.
- On this side, as it down and onward goes 127
 it takes away the memory of sin,
 on that, good actions past its waves disclose.
- On this side it is Lethè, where begin 130
 the further waters, 'tis Eunoë named ;
 he must taste both who would these powers win.
- This taste surpasses all that is most famed, 133
 and even although your thirst were satisfied
 and you from us no further guidance claimed,
- Still, a corollary may be supplied,— 136
 I trow it will not be less sweet,—of grace,
 if I beyond my promise have replied.
- Those noble poets of the ancient race 139
 who sang the Golden Age and all its bliss,
 dreamed, haply, on Parnassus, of this place :
- For here man's race was innocent and this 142
 is Spring eternal, every fruit is here,
 and this sweet stream the fabled nectar is."
- I looked behind me to my poets near, 145
 and on each countenance a smile could trace,
 as they had heard this explanation clear.
- Then to the lovely Maid I turned my face. 148

PURGATORIO CANTO XXIX

Then singing as enamoured maids are wont 1
 the Lady, after her first speech, went on
 chanting, "*Beati quorum tecta sunt*
Peccata," and, as nymphs who wander, lone, 4
 through the wild woods, one of them keen to see,
 another to escape the shining Sun,
 She walked along the bank abreast of me. 7
 against the current of the stream we went
 with shortened steps, proceeding daintily.
 A hundred paces on, the river bent 10
 with both its margins, so that it befell
 my face was towards the Eastern firmament.
 Nor had we gone much further through this dell 13
 when a full turn towards me the damsel made,
 and said, "My brother, look, and listen well."
 And, lo, a sudden brightness through the glade 16
 shone, and through all the mighty wood was spread,—
 I dreamed a sudden lightning was displayed,
 But that the lightning dies as it is sped, 19
 while this, continuing, ever brighter shone.
 " What thing is this ? " within myself I said.
 And then a melody of tender tone 22
 ran through the shining air,—my holy zeal
 reproached Eve for the boldness she had shown :
 Where heaven and earth obedience did reveal, 25
 a single woman, she, but newly made,
 refused to put upon her any veil :
 Whereunder, had she but devoutly stayed, 28
 these joys ineffable had all been mine
 for ages further, nor so long delayed.
 When I went forward, among these divine 31
 firstfruits of joys eternal, and while I
 enraptured did for further pleasures pine,
 Before us all the air's immensity 34
 became a fire beneath the leafy boughs
 and like a chant came the sweet melody.

P U R G A T O R I O

- Oh, Maids most holy, if my nightly vows 37
to you have been in cold and hunger paid,
I ask such guerdon as your grace allows.
- 'Tis meet that Helicon's full stream should aid, 40
and that Urania's choir should be supplied,
that record of these strange events be made.
- A little further onward we descried 43
seven trees of gold, that so seemed to our sight,
in that the distance from us was so wide.
- But when I had approached, so that aright 46
I could discern their nature, losing nought
in dim perceptions, vague and composite,
- That sense by which our reasoning is wrought 49
showed them as candelabra, and the song
of the "Hosanna" to my memory brought.
- Upon us, from above, the pageant flung 52
a light more splendid than the Moon's, when she
moves in full glory the still skies along.
- Then did I turn me round, and wonderingly 55
gazed on good Virgil, who then seemed indeed
in aspect full of like amaze to be.
- I turned and to these lofty things gave heed 58
that then encountered us, moving full slow,
not e'en like newly-wedded brides in speed.
- The Lady cried, "Now, wherefore do you go 61
gazing so ardently on each great light,
and on what follows them no glances throw?"
- Then did I see a company in white 64
following as men their leaders do, who shone
with purer glow than e'er met human sight.
- Bright were the waters that I looked upon 67
there, on the left, and gave back all my face
gazing therein, as mirror might have done.
- When on my bank I did myself so place 70
that nothing but the river came between,
to see more clear, I halted in my pace.
- I saw the flames rush on with fiery sheen 73
leaving the air all tinctured with the glow,
like banners fluttering where they had been.

P U R G A T O R I O

Seven bands of colour did the heavens show, 76
 like to those tints which furnish, in the sky,
 Delia her girdle, and the Sun his bow.
 Far to the rear, and backward from on high 79
 these glories streamed further than eye could trace :
 ten paces between each there seemed to lie.
 Beneath that radiant sky with solemn pace 82
 came four-and-twenty elders, two by two,
 each brow did wreathèd flower-de-luce enlace.
 "Blessed be thou," they sang in order due, 85
 "among all Adam's daughters. Blessed, too, be
 thy beauties all unending ages through."
 When the sweet flowers and herbs, that tenderly 88
 adorned the other bank, were free from those
 who formed that chosen company, I could see,
 Even as one star another follows close, 91
 four creatures following in the same way :
 woven green leaves did each one's wreath compose.
 Each had six wings furnished with an array 94
 of eyes on every feather. Argus might,
 if living now, a form like this display.
 To tell of all their wondrous shape aright 97
 I cannot spare more verses, being bound
 of many another marvel here to write.
 Read you Ezekiel, where will be found 100
 those creatures issuing from the region cold,
 with fire and wind and clouds encompassed round.
 And such as his prophetic words unfold 103
 were these : their wings thus numbering aright,
 with John and not that prophet do I hold.
 Into the space between them came in sight 106
 borne on two wheels, a great triumphal Car
 drawn forward by a harnessed Gryphon's might.
 He stretched his shining pinions upward far 109
 between the middle band and either three,
 so that with nothing did his winging jar.
 Upward they rose beyond where we could see. 112
 his bird-like members were all formed of gold,
 mixed red and white the others seemed to be.

P U R G A T O R I O

- Never Augustus in such splendour rolled, 115
 nor Africanus, through the applause of Rome.
 the Sun's own car could no such triumph hold,
 That car which once endeavouring to roam 118
 beyond its path, at Earth's devoted prayer
 Jove, just in secret counsel, did consume.
 By the right wheel, in ring, three ladies fair 121
 came dancing, one of them so red of hue
 she would have vanished in a fire's hot flare.
 It seemed as though the second damsel drew 124
 from emerald her flesh and bones, like snow
 the third seemed when its flakes fall white and new.
 Now led by this white dame they seemed to go, 127
 now by the lady red whose songful cries
 drew the rest forward either quick or slow.
 By the left wheel four held festivities 130
 all robed in purple, following the pace
 of one within whose head were set three eyes.
 After these groups, whose various forms I trace, 133
 came two old men, diversely habited,
 but like in act, honest and grave of face.
 One seemed as though a lifetime he had led 136
 familiar with that high Hippocrates
 nature gave those by her most cherishèd.
 The other, different objects seemed to please, 139
 for he a sharp and shining weapon bore
 which made me, on my bank, even, ill at ease.
 Then of an humble aspect there came four, 142
 and, last of all, an old man walked alone
 who, though in trance, a keen-set countenance wore.
 These seven were dressed as those who first had gone, 145
 save only, on their foreheads, as they went,
 no garland made of wreathèd lilies shone :
 Instead were roses and such blossoms blent 148
 in scarlet glow, to all above their eyes
 they semblance of a flaming splendour lent.
 Then, when the Car approached me, from the skies 151
 loud thunder rolled, and all the worthies stayed
 as though forbid, and all their companies
 A halt beneath their first insignia made. 154

PURGATORIO CANTO XXX

When this, the Wain, that glows in the first heaven, 1
 which fall nor rising knows, nor any veil
 save sin, and as a guide to mortals given
 Points the true way of duty, as men hail 4
 the shining of the Wain amid our sky
 and guided thus safe to their harbour sail,
 At last had stopped, these men of verity 7
 who first between the light and Gryphon went,
 turned towards the Car as their security.
 And one of them as though from heaven sent, 10
 ‘*Veni sponsa de Libano*’ thrice sang,
 while all the rest joined in accompaniment.
 And even as saints at the last trumpet’s clang 13
 shall from their graves arise, new-voiced, to cry
 ‘*Halleluia*’ sweetlier than e’er it rang,
 A hundred voices from the Car rose high 16
 Ad vocem tanti senis, heavenly, all
 angels and ministers of eternity.
 ‘*Benedictus qui venis*’ was their call 19
 and ‘*Manibus O date lilia*
 plenis,’ as flowers they from their hands let fall.
 Erst have I seen the Eastern heavens draw 22
 at dawn to rosy red, and all the West
 clothed in serene fair sky without a flaw,
 While the Sun’s orb was all in shadow dressed 25
 that tempered to the eye his burning face
 so that for long on it the eye might rest,
 So, in that cloud of flowers that rose apace 28
 thrown from the angel hands, and fell adown
 inward and outward, over all that place,
 White-veiled and furnished with an olive crown, 31
 a Lady then appeared, whose mantle green
 over a robe of flaming hue was thrown.
 And then my spirit, which had waiting been 34
 so long a time, since shaken once before
 with trembling awe when it that face had seen,

P U R G A T O R I O

Although my eyes now told me nothing more, 37
 yet, by a secret power which was her own,
 felt the old love that had been mine of yore.
 Soon as my eyes her image lit upon, 40
 that power transfix'd me which had struck my mind
 before that even my boyhood's years had flown.
 Leftward I turned me, even as children find 43
 in fear or sorrow their resource to lie
 within their mother's arms, ready and kind,
 To my Guide, Virgil, with appealing cry : 46
 "The pulsings of my blood all trembling run :
 I feel my ancient passion's mastery."
 But Virgil, lo, had left us, and had gone, 49
 Virgil, my father sweet,—Virgil,—he whom
 for safety I so long had leant upon.
 Nor could that garden in its glorious bloom 52
 lost by our mother Eve, keep back the tears
 from staining all my countenance with gloom.
 "Dante, weep not that now no more appears 55
 your Virgil. Weep not yet : another sword,
 bringing to you fresh cause for weeping, nears."
 Even as an Admiral heartens those aboard 58
 his ship, by passing to the stern and prow,
 urging them to brave deeds by hand and word,
 So, on the Car to left, (and wondering, now, 61
 at utterance of my name, which thus to write
 nought but necessity could e'er allow),
 I saw a Lady who, veiled in the light 64
 of falling flowers I had beheld before,
 now o'er the stream upon me lift her sight,
 Though from the veil that on her head she wore, 67
 crowned with Minerva's leaves, I could not see
 clearly the features that her countenance bore.
 Queenlike in act, though stern she seemed to me 70
 as one who speaks but keeps until the end
 the hottest words of all his oratory.
 "Look well upon me truly, and attend : 73
 for I am Beatrice.—How do you dare
 to this Mount of man's bliss your way to wend ?"

P U R G A T O R I O

My stricken eyes down to the river there	76
I bent, then cast them on the meadow green, seeing my face whose shame I could not bear.	
So does a mother speak in anger keen	79
chiding her child, for bitter is the taste of wrath, although it born of love hath been.	
She ceased to speak : the Angel choir in haste	82
sang ' <i>In Te, Domine, speravi</i> ,'—all as far as ' <i>pedes meos</i> ' is embraced.	
As snows, that on the living rafters fall	85
of Italy's roof, in the Sclavonian blast freeze, as it sweeps across the wintry pall,	
Then, trickling downward, lo, are melted fast	88
if that land breathe whereon no shade appears, as, by the flame, a candle cannot last,	
So I remained with neither sighs nor tears	91
before that song chanted by those whose tone echoed the eternal music of the spheres.	
But when I heard from thence such pity shown	94
in sweeter music than if they had said :	
" Lady, why shame upon him have you thrown ? "	
The ice that round my heart had gathered	97
broke into breath and water, and with pain sore at my breast was from my eyelids shed.	
And she who stood upon that festal Wain,	100
turning towards them, thus her words addressed to those who, pitying did my cause sustain :	
" You watch eternally nor do you rest	103
by night nor sleep, so that beneath your eyes each step the world takes is to you confessed ;	
So do I gravely measure my replies	106
that we may hear who yonder weeps, and know sorrows are measured by iniquities.	
Not only do the spheres majestic throw	109
their influence on each seed, that to its end predestined by the stars each one shall go,	
But by the help the heavenly graces lend	112
who shed their rain of blessing from on high from far beyond where sight can e'er extend,	

PURGATORIO

- This man was one who might potentially 115
in his fresh time of youthfulness attain
to wondrous growth of each good quality.
For in the lands which rankest weeds maintain 118
when waste and all untilled, by that alone
we know what powers in the soil remain.
So for a time on him my glance was thrown 121
in succour, and to him my girlish eye
pointed the way I would that he had gone.
But when my life, as years went slowly by, 124
altered into its second stage, he went
from me and sought for other company.
When, then, my spirit from its flesh was sent 127
raising my power and beauty more and more,
less suited did I seem to his intent,
So that he turned him, and began to explore 130
false paths that led to vain imaginings,
that no fulfilment of their promise bore.
Nought it availed that I found other springs 133
of thought in dreams, and otherwise, to draw
his spirit back. He recked not of such things.
So low he fell, all reasoning and law 136
failed, till alone remained this chance,—his sin
some vision of the lost might overawe.
For this I sought the portals where within 139
the dead are held, and him who showed the way
I prayed that dreadful journey to begin.
For God's high purposes it would betray 142
were Lethè passed, and fruits like these possessed
without there being some such price to pay,
And were not sin with penitence redressed." 145

PURGATORIO CANTO XXXI

“O you who walk beside the holy stream,” 1
her speech was pointed now to me, which showed
sharper than when I felt its edge’s gleam.
And thus, without delay, her speaking flowed : 4
“ Say, say if this be true, to such a tale
an answer and confession now are owed.”
So did my words in deep confusion fail 7
that even they dropped and vanished with dismay
before they left my vocal organs’ pale.
She paused some time : then said, “ What do you say ?
what do you think ? Reply. Not yet from you 11
has Lethè ta’en sad memories away.”
Then fear and dire confusion from me drew 13
the answer “ Yea,” that from my lips so rose
that sight alone could catch its meaning true.
As a strong cross-bow breaks when drawn too close 16
its chord and arrow, and the bolt so spent
with lessened force towards the target goes,
So did I fall beneath this charge, all bent 19
and shattered, pouring forth my tears and sighs :
my voice no more through its weak passage went.
Whence she to me, “ If love of me comprise 22
ambition towards that good beyond whose range
nought further of beatitude there lies,
What pitfalls on your pathway yawned to change 25
your purpose, or what chains your passing on
could hinder, or your hopes of it derange ?
And what enticements, what advantage won 28
lured you in other faces, that, where they
resorted, you before them should have gone ? ”
After a deep-drawn sigh scarce could I say 31
a word to answer her, my lips scarce served
to shape the spoken words that on them lay.
Weeping, I cried, “ Alas, my footsteps swerved 34
by reason of false shows that held my sight
soon as from me your aspect was reserved.”

P U R G A T O R I O

- Then she, "If you were silent or outright 37
denied your fault, no less would it be known
unerringly, such is your judge's might.
- But when confession from the lips is thrown 40
sincerely, in the Court where now you are,
against the edge we turn the grinding-stone.
- However, that more shame you now may bear, 43
and that in chances that time yet may bring,
against the Sirens may make stouter war,
- No longer sow in tears, but, listening, 46
learn how my buried flesh might have controlled
your soul, and led it to some nobler thing.
- Nature could never form, nor art unfold 49
a pleasure greater than these limbs contained
wherein I lived,—now dust, scattered and cold.
- If from this highest joy my death constrained 52
your turning, what of mortal things was there
for which in you a like desire remained ?
- Truly it was your duty to prepare 55
at the first arrow shot by earth's deceit,
after me in my heavenly change to fare.
- Your wings should not have fallen thus to meet 58
new arrows, nor, 'mid other vanities
short-lived, have flown some foolish girl to greet.
- A young bird waits fresh shots before it flies, 61
but for the full-fledged, nets are spread in vain,
and hopelessly his bolts the fowler plies."
- As little children often dumb remain 64
when chidden, with their eyes upon the ground,
full of self-conscious penitence and pain,
- So did I stand. She said, "Since at the sound 67
of my reproach you sorrow, lift your beard
and further grief by looking will be found."
- With less resistance is the oak tree cleared 70
before them by our northern winds or those
from lands that once the rule of Iarbas feared,
- Than at her words my visage upwards rose. 73
when by the 'beard' I knew my face she sought,
I felt that venom did her words enclose.

PURGATORIO

- And as once more my eyes on them were brought 76
 I saw those primal creatures pause amid
 the showers of falling blossoms which they wrought,
 And with my eyes which scarce their duty did 79
 I saw how Beatrice towards the Creature lent
 which in one form a dual nature hid.
 Although beyond the stream and veiled she went, 82
 she seemed to me her old self to outshine
 as she did others here, ere life was spent.
 The nettle of remorse with cruel spine 85
 so pierced me that of all things that I loved,
 thus drawn thereto, I did to hate incline.
 And penitence within my heart so moved 88
 that I was conquered, what did else betide
 she knoweth best who thus my spirit proved.
 When to my heart some knowledge was supplied 91
 of outward things, the Lady whom, alone,
 I first encountered, "Hold me, hold me!" cried.
 Into the river, with her I had gone 94
 up to the neck immersed. She leading me
 light as a shuttle o'er the waves had flown.
 When near the blessed bank, the melody 97
 '*Asperges me*' I heard: how sweet it rose
 I cannot write or tell from memory.
 The Lady then did in her arms enclose 100
 my head perforce, and dipped it so that I
 drank of the water that in Lethè flows.
 Then, bathed, she led me forth immediately 103
 into the dance of the four maids, who me
 embraced each with her arm, as I came nigh.
 "Nymphs are we here," they carolled joyously, 106
 "and stars in heaven. Ere Beatrice had gone
 to earth we were ordained her maids to be.
 We can but lead you to her eyes alone, 109
 those three of deeper gaze will whet your sight
 the joyous light within to look upon."
 So sang they as they drew my steps aright 112
 to Beatrice, who, at the Gryphon's breast
 and turned somewhat towards us, stood upright.

PURGATORIO

- They said, "Give not your contemplation rest 115
for here you stand before those emerald fires
whence Love his arrows to your heart addressed."
Hotter than flame, a myriad of desires 118
drew my eyes to those others which were thrown
upon the Gryphon. Even as glass aspires
To show the Sun, the twofold Creature shone 121
within them : now, one nature was expressed
and now the other's attributes alone.
Think, Reader, how I marvelled thus to see 124
the Creature moveless, and its image there
changing its guise with strange activity.
While thus my soul tasted sweet fruit and rare 127
that while it satisfies, brings in its train
new thirst in those who to its use repair,
Those other three who seemed a higher plane 130
of action to exhibit, came in line
slow dancing to a sweet angelic strain.
"Turn, Beatrice ; O turn your eyes divine," 133
such was their song, "to him who true has been
and who has come so far to see them shine.
To us, O, graciously yourself demean 136
and that sweet mouth unveil that he may know
the second beauty of your face unseen."
Splendour of light eternal, who can grow 139
so pale beneath Parnassus, or its well
so deeply drink, that shadows do not show
About his mind, when trying forth to tell 142
the glory that was shown when, pictured clear,
in all the harmonies that in heaven dwell,
To the free air you let your form appear ? 145

PURGATORIO CANTO XXXII

So fixed and eager were my eyes to slake 1
 their ten years' thirst, that every other sense
 that I possessed seemed only half-awake,
 And they were walled in by indifference 4
 on either side, so that her holy smile
 drew them, as once of old, with gaze intense.
 These goddesses I heard, after a while 7
 as I, perforce, turned towards them, muttering,
 "He looks upon her in too fixed a style."
 And as one's eyes the Sun by dazzling 10
 deprives of sight, at first, when turned aside,
 so were mine blind and saw not anything.
 But when the lesser objects I descried 13
 (lesser, I mean, than that before my sight
 far greater, but to my fond eyes denied),
 I saw the glorious pageant wheel to right 16
 returning with the Sun upon its front
 and following the candles' seven-fold light.
 And as a troop with shields advanced is wont 19
 to move its standards round, and thus, alone,
 changing its form, to avoid the battle's brunt,
 The heavenly soldiery, that first had gone 22
 in order, passed us ere the Chariot
 with bending pole a change of course had shown.
 Their places by the wheels the damsels sought 25
 and all the hallowed weight the Gryphon drew
 so that a feather of it rustled not.
 She, who led me the river of Lethè through, 28
 and Statius, and I kept close beside
 the wheel which shorter turning had to do.
 Pacing that lofty forest, now denied 31
 to man through her who listened to the Snake,
 an Angel song began our steps to guide.
 Such space as, haply, might an arrow make 34
 thrice shot, we passed when Beatrice I saw
 come downwards, and the Chariot forsake.

P U R G A T O R I O

All murmured "Adam," then I saw them draw 37
 in circle round a tree that was all bare
 of flower and leaf in every branch and shaw,
 Whose bowery head as it rose high in air 40
 spread wider : Indians would have it esteemed
 as something in their forests great and rare.
 "O Gryphon," cried they, "blessed be you deemed 43
 whose beak has ravaged nothing from this tree
 that twists the belly though so sweet it seemed."
 So did they shout around the trunk, and he 46
 the Creature bipartite, joined with a cry :
 "The seed of right thus gains security."
 Then having turned him to the pole whereby 49
 he drew the Car, he dragged it to the tree
 to which its former branch I saw him tie.
 And as our trees, when the great Light they see 52
 mingled with the celestial Fishes' glow,
 crowning and strengthening in its brilliancy,
 Swell into blossom and begin to show 55
 each one its colour ere the Sun has shone
 from out another sign on earth below,
 Taking a hue less than the rose's tone 58
 and more than violets display, the tree
 bloomed where bare branches it before had shown.
 Unknown their song, nor is it sung by me 61
 which then from all that company arose :
 I scarce could suffer its full melody.
 If I could paint how tireless eyes may close 64
 like those of Argus when he heard the tale
 of Syrinx,—eyes whose vigil cost such woes,—
 As painter who from model paints to scale, 67
 I would design how then I fell asleep,
 if to draw sleep a painter's powers avail.
 I pass till when that veil of slumber deep 70
 was sundered by a sudden light and cry,
 " What do you there ? Arise." When to the steep,
 The Apple Tree in blossom to descry 73
 whose fruit the Angels tempts, and which leads on
 perpetual marriage-feasting in the sky,

PURGATORIO

These three were brought,—Peter, and James, and John,
 sleep conquered them, until that word was said 77
 before which deeper slumberings had flown.
 They found both Moses and Elias fled 79
 from out their company, and saw appear
 the garments of their Lord transfigurèd,
 So I awoke and saw her bending, near 82
 my face, who first had been the gentle guide
 to lead my steps along the streamlet clear.
 “O, where is Beatrice?” I wondering cried. 85
 she said, “She sits there on the root, below
 the new leaves of the tree which now spreads wide.
 Look at those circled round about her: know 88
 that all the others with the Gryphon are:
 with sweeter and with loftier songs they go.”
 And if her speaking was prolonged, how far 91
 it went I know not, for before my eyes
 was she who could from them all else debar.
 Alone she sat before me in the guise 94
 of one left there to guard the Car made fast
 by him possessing double entities.
 The seven Nymphs a ring about her cast, 97
 bearing those lights in hand whose constant blaze
 yields neither to the south nor north wind’s blast.
 “Here shall you stay within these forest ways 100
 awhile, then with me always in that Rome
 wherein a Roman citizen Christ stays.
 And that some good to the vile world may come 103
 gaze, therefore, on the Car, and what you see
 write truly when you reach your worldly home.”
 Thus Beatrice, and I who fain would be 106
 the servant of her wishes, at her feet
 laid mind and sight in all humility.
 Never did fire, from cloud descending fleet, 109
 so swiftly burst when falling from the air
 where is appointed its remotest seat,
 As I saw sweeping through that foliage fair 112
 Jove’s bird, his beak in pieces tearing leaves
 and flowers new-born, destroying everywhere.

P U R G A T O R I O

- He smote the Car that rocked as a ship heaves 115
to starboard or to larboard labouring
helplessly, as the weltering deep it cleaves.
- Then did I see a hungry she-fox spring 118
into the Car, and, famished, as though she
were fasting long from any healthful thing.
- My Lady, censuring her iniquity, 121
encountered her, and drove her from the scene,
as quickly as her wasted limbs could flee.
- The Eagle, flying down from where he had been, 124
entered the Car, and feathers here and there
shed from his plumage, lay its sides between.
- Even as from a heart bowed down with care 127
a voice from heaven spoke, "Now my little boat,
O what an evil burden do you bear!"
- Looking between the two wheels I could note 130
a Dragon there the earth asunder tore,
and through the Car its tail from under smote.
- Even as a wasp her sting retracts, he bore, 133
as he withdrew the tail and went his way,
along with him part of the Chariot's floor,
- And what was left of it, even as the clay 136
takes on green growth, became all feathered o'er
with plumes that there as kindly tribute lay.
- Both wheels were covered, and the pole too bore 139
that soft equipment, less time being spent
than needs a sigh in passing the mouth's door.
- The Car thus plumed, then became evident 142
heads upon it, three o'er the pole and one
on each of the four corners eminent.
- The three were horned like oxen, while upon 145
each of the others one sharp horn appeared,
to us so strange a monster ne'er was shown.
- Seated within, as on a fortress reared 148
among the mountains, was a harlot bold,
who with lascivious eyes around her leered.
- And as if striving at his side to hold 151
this woman stood a Giant. O'er and o'er
they kissed with close embraces manifold.

PURGATORIO

And since towards me her lustful glances bore, 154
that harlot was attacked from head to heel,
and beaten by her furious paramour.
As raging jealousy he seemed to feel, 157
he loosed the monstrous Car till it had gone
so far as from my vision to conceal
The harlot and the Beast she sat upon. 160

PURGATORIO CANTO XXXIII

“*Deus venerunt gentes,*” now began 1
 by three or four, in mingled psalmody,
 those ladies ; as they sang their tears down ran,
 And Beatrice, with sighs, and pityingly 4
 her aspect changed as, hardly Mary more
 was altered as she stood on Calvary.
 But when the other virgins had given o’er 7
 their speech for hers, erect she spoke, as hot
 as flaming fire the aspect which she wore.
 “*A little while and you will see me not,*” 10
 she said, “beloved sisters, *yet again*
a while and you shall see me.” On the spot
 She placed before her all the seven-fold train. 13
 the Lady and the Sage by nod alone
 with me, she signalled near her to remain.
 Scarce, I imagine, she ten steps had gone 16
 forward, when suddenly her eyes on mine
 with all their sweet and rare effulgence shone.
 Quietly then she spoke, “Your steps incline 19
 more quickly to my side, that when I speak,
 you may more easily my sense divine.”
 Then as I hastened my due place to seek 22
 she said, “O brother, why, when near to me
 thus do you seem so silent and so meek ?”
 As before those of greater dignity 25
 some are too much abashed, and scarce can frame
 words that complete and well-pronounced may be,
 So was I, and with utterance slow and lame 28
 I said, “My Lady, all my longing want
 you know, and what may satisfy the same.”
 Then she to me, “From shame and fears that daunt 31
 fain would I that you should your heart set free,
 no more as one whom shadowy dreamings haunt.
 Know that the Car which the malignity 34
 of that vile Dragon broke, was, and is not :
 God’s wrath will not o’erlook the iniquity.

P U R G A T O R I O

And not for ever heirless is the lot	37
of that great Eagle whose dropped feathers made first monstrous, then a prey the Chariot.	
For I can see—by me it shall be said,—	40
that stars unhindered rise,—and near they be,— by which a happier future is portrayed.	
Five hundred, ten, and five, by God's decree	43
shall slay that harlot and the Giant too, who shares with her a joint iniquity.	
Perhaps my tale mysterious may to you	46
as that of Themis or the Sphinx appear, and may your mind with shadows deep indue.	
But soon shall facts, like Naiads, serve to clear	49
this dark enigma, without loss of herds or of the golden harvest of the year.	
Note you : and as I utter forth the words	52
do you repeat them to those living still that life that but a race towards death affords.	
Remember, as this message you fulfil,	55
not to conceal that you have seen this tree twice ruined by the influence of ill.	
He who destroys or robs it, blasphemy	58
commits, and God offends who set it there, holy and consecrated to His will to be.	
For eating of it his five-thousandth year	61
of torment did one pass, waiting on Him who chose that bite's sharp punishment to bear.	
Your intellect is slumbering and dim,	64
if it see not that for a cause assigned this tree grows high with wide-inverted rim.	
And if like Elsan waters in your mind	67
vain thoughts give not to it, as Pyramus did even to the mulberry, hues of another kind,	
From all such things to you would not lie hid	70
the justice, morally, in that tree which lies, in what thus by the Almighty is forbid.	
But since I see your mind at my replies	73
even as a stone is petrified and shines with light from them which only stupefies,	

P U R G A T O R I O

- Still as I wish, though not in written lines 76
 at least marked out, carry my word with you
 as pilgrim with palm leaves his staff entwines."
- Then I, "As wax with an impression true 79
 my mind is stamped, as is a seal that bears
 the image given, unchanged, the long years through.
- But why so far beyond what my sight dares 82
 to follow does your wished-for answer soar ?
 the more I strive, it further off appears."
- "That you may better know," she said, "the lore 85
 taught by the School you followed, and may learn
 what reference to my word its teaching bore :
- And that a distance you may well discern 88
 between them, great as is the earth's low round
 from where the highest sphere does swiftest turn."
- Then I replied to her, "I have not found 91
 within my memory, that, estranged from you
 I e'er had been nor does my conscience wound."
- "If no such memory remains," anew 94
 she smiling spoke, "bethink you how this day
 a drink you from the stream of Lethè drew :
- And as the rising smoke does fire betray, 97
 this your forgetfulness does clearly show
 your mind in error wandering far away.
- But truly now my words shall naked go 100
 as far as may be needed to disclose
 my meaning to your vision rude and slow."
- More tardily, but still more glorious rose 103
 the Sun to his meridian line, whose ray
 changes in aspect as one comes or goes,
- When these seven ladies halted, as might stay 106
 an escort that precedes some company
 when trace of danger lies upon the way,
- They stopped before a shadow such as lie 109
 on the cold Alpine streams, when summits fling
 their gloom beneath the branching greenery.
- Before them saw I welling from one spring 112
 as it were, Tigris and Euphrates, there
 parting, but with a tender lingering.

P U R G A T O R I O

- I cried, " Oh, light of human-kind, my prayer 115
 answer, what stream is this which from one well
 proceeding, parts its waves that joinèd were ? "
- She answered, " Let Matilda to you tell 118
 the thing you ask," and then that Dame to me
 replied as if all censure to repel :
- " This thing, and many another openly 121
 I have explained to him, and I am sure
 Lethè has not o'ercome his faculty."
- Then Beatrice, " Perchance he does endure 124
 some greater grief that with its care may blind
 the eye and make our faculties obscure.
- But see where sweet Eunoë's waters wind. 127
 lead him to it as you are wont to do,
 revive the failing powers of his mind."
- And as a gentle soul when spoken to 130
 thus by another, or enjoined by sign,
 to that will does her own at once subdue,
- So spoke the Lady when I to incline 133
 my steps towards her began, and " Come you too,"
 she said to Statius gentle and benign.
- If, Reader, I should longer time pursue 136
 my tale in writing, I would sing in part
 of the unsating draught that there I drew.
- My pages now are full : the curb of art 139
 my second Canticle does now restrain,
 and I can not on such a journey start.
- From those most sacred waves I rose again, 142
 and as young trees, healed from the winter's scars,
 put on new leaves, refreshed and free from stain
- Eager was I to journey to the stars. 145

PARADISO CANTO I

- The glory of the Almighty who moves all 1
 penetrates through the Universe, although
 its beams now less, now more in splendour fall.
 In heaven where most does His effulgence glow, 4
 lo, I have been: the things that I saw there
 no one can tell again to those below.
 For as to our Desire we nearer fare, 7
 our minds so deeply plunge that memory
 loses its power backwards to repair.
 Truly, the treasured memory that to me 10
 remains of all that holy place shall now
 be the material of my minstrelsy.
 O good Apollo, for this last task endow 13
 me who may be a vessel worthy found
 to wear your darling laurel on my brow.
 One summit of Parnassus' lofty mound 16
 once satisfied me, now, with both the two
 armed unto this last conflict am I bound.
 Enter my breast, as when your breathing drew 19
 from out the sheath that clothed him, Marsyas,
 so be my utterance inspired by you.
 O divine Virtue, if thou to my cause 22
 so lend thyself that in my mind is shown
 some reflex of the light in heaven that was,
 Me thou wilt see approach that tree, thine own, 25
 and I will crown me with its leaves for this,
 worthy, by thee and by my theme made known.
 So seldom, Father, is it wreathed, I wis, 28
 for Emperor or Poet,—in man's will
 both error and a shameful thing it is,
 For joy the leaf of Peneus should instil 31
 in the glad Delphic god, when it to gain
 one feels an eager thirst his bosom fill.
 To mighty flames a small spark may attain. 34
 perchance some voices after me may rise
 more worthy Cirrha's echo to obtain.

PARADISO

Through different passages across the skies 37
the Lantern of the world to mortal view
shows himself where a three-fold Cross there lies
Amid four Circles. With a course more true, 40
a star more fortunate, he seems to mould
the earthly wax into an image due.
This passage almost did with eve enfold 43
this side, and on the other daylight spread
with the white dawn while we in gloom were rolled,
When Beatrice I saw turning her head 46
leftward to view the Sun. No eagle e'er
with such a look that Orb encounterèd.
And as a second ray will back repair 49
from out the first, as pilgrim who betrays
his longing to return again, so, there,
Even from her gesture did there come a blaze 52
of fancy through my eyes, and on the Sun
beyond what is my wont I fixed my gaze.
Much is permitted there, and may be done 55
which here is far beyond our faculties,
for 'tis a place made for our race alone.
Not long could I withstand his blaze,—my eyes 58
were dazzled by the sparkling jets of flame
that leapt, as they from molten metal rise.
And suddenly it seemed that day became 61
added to day, as though its Maker placed
in the Sun's track another of the same.
Beatrice stood there, and her vision faced 64
the eternal Circles while I fixed my sight
on her, from those high spheres somewhat abased.
And all within me from that vision bright 67
became as Glaucus felt when he had fed
on grass that raised him to a sea-god's height.
And not in human words could it be said 70
how human bounds are passed, though known it be
by those whom grace has to such trial led.
If I a new-created entity 73
that hour became, O Love, who rul'st the sky
thou only know'st whose light uplifted me.

PARADISO

When thou to whom eternal longings fly 76
 had drawn me to the heavenly Wheel whose way
 thou guidest, tempering it to harmony,
 It seemed as though the Sun's o'ermastering ray 79
 so spread o'er all the heavens, that rain nor flood
 could such a wide-extended lake display.
 The newness of the sound, the plenitude 82
 of light in me awoke such eagerness
 towards them as ne'er before had stirred my blood.
 Then she who saw in me my longings' stress, 85
 to still my movèd soul before that I
 had spoken, oped her lips me to address,
 And thus began, " All this obscurity 88
 of fancies false you raise in your own mind
 which, blinded, sees not till you put them by.
 You are no longer to the earth confined : 91
 returning thence, the bolt that flees the cloud,
 its home, in swiftmess you would leave behind."
 If from the doubt that I had first avowed 94
 these brief and smiling words had set me free,
 again another did my mind enshroud.
 " Content from one great wonderment to be 97
 at rest," I said, " I cannot wonder less
 how such light powers can be surpassed by me."
 And then she, with a sigh of pitifulness 100
 regarded me, as might a mother gaze
 upon her child's delirious distress.
 She said, " All things are ordered in their ways : 103
 this does the Universe by mould divine
 into the very form of God upraise.
 Herein the higher beings see the sign 106
 of Worth eternal which is thus the end
 to which their normal entities incline.
 And in this order, as I say, they tend 109
 some near, some further off, by various fates
 all eager with this principle to blend.
 They all do sail from various harbour-gates 112
 o'er the great sea of being, and each soul
 the instinct of advance alike inflates.

PARADISO

- So does the flame rise moonward, to the goal 115
of death are mortal hearts first moved, so clings
the earth together, drawn into one whole.
- Not only is it among senseless things 118
this arrow flies, but among those who know
both Love and intellectual reasonings.
- The Providence, from which all this doth flow, 121
stills in its light eternal that expanse
wherein the swiftest Cycle whirls aglow.
- And to that region now do we advance 124
borne by that power, that string which ever shoots
whatever bolt it holds to happiest chance.
- Oft, it is true, the form but little suits, 127
made of material both dull and slow,
with the high end which Art to it imputes.
- So from this course divergently may go 130
some creature whose free will leads it to hie
thus hampered, to some other place below,—
- As you may see the fire fall from the sky,— 133
if the first impetus of its design
is turned to earth by pleasure's luring cry.
- Nor should you wonder more that you incline 136
upward, than that, down from the mountain's brow
rolling, the falling river's cataracts shine.
- Wondrous, indeed, were it if you should now 139
being unhindered, rest, as 'twere to see
on earth live flames burn with unmoving glow."
- Then heavenward turned her gaze away from me. 142

PARADISO CANTO II

O you, who long to hear what I may say 1
 and follow close within your little boat
 my vessel that goes singing on its way,
 Return to your own coasts, nor dare to float 4
 into the wide sea, lest, no guidance by
 from me, you perish on the waves remote.
 To sail this ocean none have dared to try : 7
 Minerva blows, Apollo is my guide,
 the Muses nine point to the Bears on high.
 And you, though few, who, reaching up have tried 10
 timely to catch the angels' food which here
 they eat, but ne'er are over-satisfied,
 May launch your ship on the great deep, and, near, 13
 following my track before the waters fall
 again to level surface, you may steer.
 But so they marvelled who, at Jason's call, 16
 followed to Colchis when their leader there
 like to a ploughman, toiled before them all.
 The thirst for heaven, from our birth that ne'er 19
 falls from us, bore us to the realms divine
 as quick as to the heavens your eyes repair.
 Her eyes did Beatrice lift upwards, mine 22
 were fixed on her, and in as short a space
 as rests a bolt ere shot from the tense line,
 I saw myself conveyed to a strange place 25
 where wonders met my eyes ; and she to whom
 my actions were disclosed in every trace,
 Turned to me, glad and beautiful. " Assume," 28
 she said, " to God the guise of thankfulness
 that this first star our union doth illume."
 It seemed as though a cloud began to press 31
 about us, clear, solid, and dense, and bright,
 as when sunbeams with sheen the diamond dress.
 The Eternal Pearl enwrapt us, as the light 34
 is taken by the water though it shows
 no cleft that would its surface disunite.

PARADISO

- If I were body,—and here no one knows 37
 how one dimension could be held within
 another, or one form a form enclose,—
- That Essence should we fondlier seek wherein 40
 we witness how the nature which we share
 a perfect union with our God could win.
- And what by faith we hold we shall see there 43
 not proven, but disclosed as truth innate,
 known to be such by mankind everywhere.”
- I then replied, “ My Lady, not ingrate 46
 as far as in me lies, am I to Him
 who from the mortal world has changed my state.
- But tell me of those markings dark and dim 49
 upon this sphere, which men on earth below
 babbling of Cain, weave into legends grim.”
- Then smiling, she replied, “ If wandering go 52
 the minds of mortals where the key of sense
 serves not the doors of meaning wide to throw,
- Truly the darts of wonder coming thence 55
 need not disturb, when with the sense revealed
 the reasoning mind still owns its impotence :
- Tell me what fruit your own enquiries yield ? ” 58
 then I, “ These diverse bodies seem to me
 rarefied, or in density congealed.”
- “ Truly,” she said, “ you will confounded be 61
 in doctrine false if, but a while, you list
 to the assaults of my philosophy.
- In the Eighth Sphere full many lights exist 64
 whose volume and whose quality declare
 that they of diverse aspects all consist.
- If it were but that they more dense or rare 67
 expanded, then one power o’er the whole
 would spread, and it would have in each a share.
- But, doubt not, formal principles control 70
 each separate virtue where you would allow
 nought but the one, here acting single and sole.
- Again if rarity alone could show 73
 this shade, the planet were in part, at least
 thus lean in substance, or it would, I trow,

PARADISO

Alternately, be here with fat increased, and here made thin, varying in quality book-like, or as the body of a beast.	76
If that first dream be true, then should we see amid the Sun's eclipse, his rays appear transpiercing as they do such rarity.	79
But it is not so. If the second bear no better this my scrutiny, your thought will have throughout a refutation clear.	82
If, then, indeed, it be these rays are caught by denser substance, we the line could trace where they are by reflection backward brought,	85
And cast again towards us, as the face of glass throws out an image when behind its surface, secretly, we metal place.	88
But you will say that we the darkness find because from further have the rays been sent and so they seem less powerful in their kind.	91
From such a theory, experiment would set you free (if you will make the test)— that fount which to your arts its streams has lent.	94
Take, then, three mirrors, one behind the rest place in position, so that 'tween the two, but further off, the light comes from its breast.	97
And let that light be further off than you so that its ray thrown back comes to your eyes as all the three are ranged before your view.	100
Then shall you see that though of smaller size yet equal in its power the central ray with those reflected by the others vies.	103
Now, as the smitten snow-wreath melts away beneath the glowing Sun, losing its cold, and the white perfectness in which it lay,	106
So shall I leave you stripped of every fold of reason by this light, that so shall shine throbbing with life, as you its glow behold.	109
Far centered in the heaven of peace divine a body whirls around whose powers maintain all of the being that its bounds enshrine.	112

PARADISO

- Next, full of wonders, is a heaven again 115
 which parts this being into essences
 distinguished, but which in its bounds remain.
- The other rings their various potencies 118
 dispose in various ways shaping them all
 to ends and roots of future purposes.
- These organs of creation cosmical, 121
 even as you see, their power from grade to grade
 take from above, and from beneath let fall.
- Look then how thus the narrow strait I wade 124
 of you desired, so that with knowledge clear
 alone by you the passage may be made.
- The motions and the powers that thus appear 127
 in these great Rings, as does the hammered steel
 the influence of the blessed Movers bear.
- And lo, the night whose clustering stars reveal 130
 its solemn deeps, takes from the mind profound,
 that moves it round, its image and its seal.
- And as the soul within your clay is found 133
 through various members formed for different ends
 and various faculties diffused around,
- So the Intelligence its virtue sends 136
 diffused among the stars, and yet its way
 round its own unity it ever wends.
- Powers so diverse different alloys display 139
 mixed with each precious body, in which site
 they are contained as life in you to-day.
- And from glad nature when it takes its flight 142
 the power, through all the body mixed, so glows
 as gleams the eyeball with its pure delight.
- Thence comes it that a change of power grows 145
 'twixt light and light, but not 'twixt dense and rare.
 such is the principle whose virtue shows
- This difference 'twixt the turbid and the clear." 148

PARADISO CANTO III

That Sun, which first with love had warmed my breast,
 thus did the beauty of the truth display, 2
 by proof and disproof, to my mind exprest :
 And I, to own myself before astray, 4
 and now corrected and confirmed, had raised
 my head as though I had some words to say.
 But, lo, a sight appeared which so amazed 7
 my spirit, and so held my wondering eyes
 that memory of my purpose was erased.
 As from a glass's clear transparencies, 10
 or from translucent waters of still flow,
 whose bed in shadow not too deeply lies,
 The shadows of our faces seem to grow 13
 slowly upon our vision as we look,
 faint as a pearl upon a brow of snow,
 So, many faces which the aspect took 16
 of eager speech, I saw, to error led
 other than his who loved the answering brook.
 Soon as I saw them, deeming they were shed 19
 as images upon a mirror thrown,
 to find their origins I turned my head
 And nothing saw. When once again had gone 22
 my gaze to find the light of some sweet Guide
 she smiled : her eyes with holy brightness shone.
 "Marvel not that I smile," she said, "beside 25
 your thought, that like a child, its timorous pace
 to Truth's own pathway will not yet confide,
 But leads you, as of old, to empty space. 28
 true substances indeed, are those you see,
 for vows unkept, remitted to this place.
 But speak to them and listen trustfully, 31
 for that true light which brings to them content
 allows not that from it they wanderers be."
 And I, to that faint shade whose keen intent 34
 seemed greatest to address me, turned, as though
 my soul had been with over-longing spent.

PARADISO

- “ O spirit made for bliss, who in the glow 37
of light eternal have had power to feel
that sweetness which untasted, none may know,
Grateful to me it were should you reveal 40
the name you bear and what your fate may be.”
quick, with glad eyes she answered my appeal,
“ The love we bear no more will turn the key 43
on a just wish than those who would endow
all about them with equal charity.
A virgin sister was I there below, 46
and should you search your memory, my face
will not be hid in beauty’s new-won glow.
Again Piccarda’s features you will trace 49
who here with blest companions joys to be
within the sphere that moves with tardiest pace.
For our affections in felicity 52
born of the Holy Spirit glow nor fail
to be rejoiced with such conformity.
And this our lot so lowly in the scale 55
is given us for that we broke our vows,
or their fulfilment did in part curtail.”
Then I to her, “ Your wondrous beauty glows 58
as though within it shone some holy light
that o’er all aspects past its glory throws :
Wherefore I did not recollect aright 61
your person, but you now remind me well,
and in my memory ’tis more definite.
But tell me, you who here in happiness dwell, 64
do you desire some loftier place to see
or a more wide-flung friendship to compel ? ”
Then to the other shades she turned from me 67
smiling, and answered with so glad a tone,
alight with love’s first flame she seemed to be.
“ Brother,” she said, “ the power of love alone 70
so calms our will, we ask for nothing more :
no further thirst beyond to us is known.
Did we aspire more loftily to soar 73
our wishes were discordant with His will
who all our places has assigned before.

PARADISO

- No other fortune can we here fulfil 76
 if love alone compel us, and if you
 keep love's own nature in your memory still.
- It is the joy of this existence true 79
 to love in limits of the Will Divine
 and to make one in bliss out of the two :
- So that from threshold unto threshold shine 82
 the joys whereby our King through all His lands
 rejoicing, does our wills to His incline.
- And His will is our peace. That Sea commands 85
 even to itself all things that it creates,
 and all that nature fashions with her hands."
- Then clear I saw how all the various states 88
 and realms of heaven are one Paradise
 though Good not every part so satiates.
- But while one food our appetite supplies 91
 beyond all need, while we for others long,—
 thanks pass for this, for that, are longing cries,
- So did I strive with gesture and with tongue 94
 to learn from her what web it was where through
 the shuttle went not all its length along.
- "Life Perfect, and the praise of Merit true 97
 make heaven about her yonder from on high
 ruling your world to dress and conduct due,
- So that, even unto death, they still are nigh, 100
 sleeping or waking, to that Spouse whose grace
 accepts all vows His love that satisfy.
- To follow her, a girl, I left my place 103
 amid the world, and, in her habit clad,
 I vowed the pathway of her sect to trace.
- Then men less used to good works than to bad 106
 tore me, perforce, from out the cloister sweet,—
 God knows the kind of life since then I had.
- This other splendour, whom your eyes will meet, 109
 on my right hand, who shines with all the glow
 of this our sphere with all its fire replete,
- Knows also that which I was doomed to know : 112
 for she a sister was from whom was rent
 the holy chaplet shadowing her brow.

P A R A D I S O

But back again into the world though sent against her will, against all use of right, never was she from consecration bent.	115
'Tis the great Constance, who thus led to unite with him, the Second Blast of Suabia, bore him the third and last Imperial Might."	118
So did she speak, and ' <i>Ave Maria</i> ' she sang, and singing, vanished, as a thing dropped in deep waters may from sight withdraw.	121
My sight as far as might be following, lost her, and then again returning, found its target in a greater hungering,	124
And all came back to Beatrice, who drowned my gaze with such a lightning look, that I scarce bore it, which at first seemed to confound	127
To slower speech my curiosity.	130

PARADISO CANTO IV

Between two tempting foods at distance set 1
a man might starve to death whose mind is free,
ere either of the two his teeth had met.

So might a lamb, 'twixt the ferocity 4
of two keen wolves, stand fixed in anxious dread,
so might a hound betwixt two roe-deer be.

And by myself I am not censurèd 7
for that I hung in doubt, suspended thus,
perforce, nor do I ask for praise instead.

I held my peace, but deep and anxious 10
upon my face was painted my desire
more warmly than by pleadings clamorous.

Then even as Daniel calmed the rising ire 13
that fed Nebuchadnezzar's cruelty,
Beatrice spoke: "The wishes, which inspire

This way and that your leaning, seem to be 16
so self-entangling that it would appear
your soul has lost its power of breathing free.

You argue, 'If the will is firm and clear 19
why should another's violence be allowed
the meed of my deserts away to sheer?'

Then, too, on you, there weighs another cloud 22
of doubt as to the souls that wander back,
each to its star, as Plato has avowed.

These are the questions which your judgment rack 25
with equal weight, therefore to succour you
that first, which is most poisonous, I attack.

That Seraph who himself can most indue 28
with Godhead, Moses, Samuel or John,—
whiche'er you choose to take,—and Mary, too,

All have their dwelling in that heaven alone 31
whence come these spirits which to you appear,
through like immortal life shall they have gone.

All shed their beauty o'er the primal sphere. 34
in their sweet life the only difference
to feel the eternal breath less or more near.

PARADISO

- Here do they show themselves, not in the sense 37
of having here their sphere assigned, but so
to mark the Circle of least eminence.
- This speech concerns that faculty where through 40
things at the first perceived by sense alone
are fashioned for the intellect to know.
- The Scriptures your restricted powers own 43
in this, by speaking of the hand or feet
of God, the higher meaning being known.
- And so the Holy Church man's shape complete 46
to Gabriel and Michael gives, as well
as him who gave Tobias healing meet.
- What from Timaeus on this question fell 49
agrees not with what here we see, yet are
his thoughts with these his words compatible.
- He says each soul returneth to its star, 52
whence he believes it was divided once
when nature shaped its form particular.
- Though it may be, perchance, these words announce
another meaning than their sound conveys, 56
and one which foolish we may not pronounce.
- If he means only that the guiding rays 58
of honour and of blame that from them flow
go back, some mark of truth his dart may graze.
- This theory mistaken long ago 61
turned all the world aside, adoring prayers
on Jove, and Mars, and Mercury, to bestow.
- That other doubt which your mind's peace impairs 64
has less of venom, for its wickedness
no influence leading you elsewhither bears.
- For, although this our Justice should express 67
injustice in men's sight, the question is
of Faith, not heresy, and the sin is less.
- But since your prudence to the truth of this 70
has power to pierce, and as you wish to hear
my words, you shall not such contentment miss.
- If it be violence when they who bear 73
contribute nothing to the wrong so wrought,
for none of these doth an excuse appear.

PARADISO

- For if the Will will not, it is not brought 76
to nothingness by force, but as the fire
oft rises, nor by strength is brought to nought,
For less or greater bending doth conspire 79
even with force, so those did who had power
again to holy refuge to retire.
If they had been but firm-willed in that hour 82
like Laurence on the grate, or Mutius
who sternly let the flame his hand devour,
That would have thrown them back, still virtuous, 85
upon the path whence they were drawn when'er
they had won free,—such wills are rare with us.
And by these words, if you their meaning fair 88
have gathered, is that argument destroyed
that often must have caused you doubt and care.
But now across your path another void 91
opens before your eyes : by you I fear
much labour ere 'twere crossed would be employed.
One thing have I within your mind made clear, 94
no blessed spirit is to lying prone
because the Primal Truth it stays so near.
Then from Piccarda you could hear 'twas known 97
how without faltering, Constance loved the veil :
though this her sentence contradicts my own.
For often told, my Brother, is the tale 100
of things done that should never have been done
yet might against some dangerous chance avail.
So did Alcmaeon, by his sire urged on, 103
slay his own mother : filial piety
preserved changed him into an impious son.
As to this point I take the truth to be 106
that violence was mingled with the will :
nought can excuse such culpability.
Will absolute consents not to fulfil 109
an evil purpose, but yields only so
that it escapes some fortune eviller still.
So when Piccarda speaks she means, I know, 112
will absolute, and I the other, thus
both of us may be said the truth to show."

PARADISO

- So the sweet stream rippling and murmurous 115
down from the Fountain of all Truth above
brought peace to both my questions anxious.
- "O you Belovèd of the Primal Love, 118
divine one, whose discourse so overflows
and warms, and doth my spirit deeplier move,
My own poor love no depth so soundless knows 121
that it suffices grace to give for grace.
may He who sees, His power interpose.
- Our intellect rests not,—this I clearly trace,— 124
till that Truth shines, beyond which, anywhere,
there is for further truth no vacant space.
- It rests therein as wild beast in his lair 127
when he has reached it, as indeed it may,
else were all longing changed into despair.
- Wherefore do questionings their shoots display 130
about the root of truth which naturally
lead us from height to height the upward way,
- This brings me, Lady, with humility 133
but with assurance, once again to sue
for light upon a truth still dark to me.
- Fain would I know if mortal man to you 136
can e'er outweigh the scale of broken vows
by other merchandise of value due."
- Beatrice turned on me her gentle brows, 139
her eyes divine with love's own fires aglow
so that, as one who his defect allows,
Lost to myself I seemed, with eyes dropt low. 142

P A R A D I S O C A N T O V

" If that I flame on you with warmer love 1
 than e'er is seen on earth, and if its might
 over your glances' strength victorious prove,
 Marvel not, for this comes of perfect sight 4
 which as it comprehends, enters upon
 and deals with what it understands aright.
 Well know I how already there has shone 7
 upon your intellect the eternal glow
 which ever kindles love by sight alone.
 And if aught lures your love aside to go 10
 'tis but a vestige of that light we see
 dim glimmering, whose sense we do not know.
 Fain would you learn if any service be 13
 a recompense for broken vows, or can
 secure the soul from any legal plea."
 So Beatrice her chanted song began, 16
 and, as a speech uttered unfalteringly,
 her words along their sacred progress ran.
 " The greatest gift of God's benignity 19
 at the Creation which most likeness bears
 to His own Worth, and which He holds most high
 In honour, is Free Will, in which there shares 22
 every created mind, intelligent,
 solely thus dowered, both now and in past years.
 So will appear, (if you the argument 25
 follow aright), the value of the vow
 in which your God consents when you consent.
 For in this pact 'twixt God and man, I trow, 28
 the victim, from what I this treasure name,
 is drawn, which does the sacrifice allow.
 What labour, then, can such a loss reclaim ? 31
 if holy things to some good use you set
 you consecrate that which from robbery came.
 Now is the main part of your questioning met, 34
 but since the Holy Church sees fit to give
 her dispensations, difficulties yet

PARADISO

Attend my speech : longer you must contrive	37
to sit at table, thus you can, alone,	
from such hard food digestion sound derive.	
Open your mind to what my words have shown	40
and fix it deep, for what you understand	
boots not, unless you keep what you have won.	
Two things about this sacrifice demand	43
your notice, first, the stuff whereof 'tis wrought,	
and secondly, the compact therewith planned.	
This latter can be satisfied by nought	46
save by its keeping,—thus was my advice,	
detailed before, made so exact in thought.	
The Hebrews had, perforce, to sacrifice	49
their offerings as you have learnt, although	
an altered form of victim might suffice.	
That other thing which you now surely know	52
as of Essentials, may not cancelled be	
though its material should changes show.	
To shift his shoulders' burden none is free	55
by his own judgment, but alone by turn	
first of the silver, then the golden key.	
Let him such changes all as folly spurn	58
unless the matter so foregone, to that	
assumed, contain a four to six return.	
Therefore that weight, which every scale lays flat,	61
cannot be counterpoised by anything,	
whatever weight it may be reckoned at.	
Let not men take a vow in frolicking.	64
be true, and not, as Jephthah's was, cross-eyed	
in the first issue of his promising.	
Better had he, ' I have done wrong,' replied,	67
than kept his vow by doing greater wrong :	
so foolish Agamemnon's daughter died	
Weeping her beauty. Iphigenia's song	70
draws tears from wise men and from simple, too,	
hearing of rites like this her race among.	
Christians, be graver in the deeds you do,	73
feather-like be not, by all breezes bent,	
nor think that every water cleanses you.	

PARADISO

- You have the Old and the New Testament, 76
 and the great Shepherd of the Church as guide,
 sufficient aids for your salvation sent.
- If miserable greed tempt you aside, 79
 be men, and not like foolish flocks of sheep
 lest you, even in your midst, the Jew deride.
- Be you not like a lamb ceasing to keep 82
 close to its mother's milk, which in light play
 eager to battle with itself will leap."
- These words I write to me did Beatrice say, 85
 and turning all her longing glance to where
 the world did most activity display.
- Her sudden ceasing, and her changing air 88
 silenced my eager wit, which still went on
 new questionings for her answering to prepare.
- Then, even as an arrow that has flown 91
 striking the target ere the string is stilled,
 into the Second Realm we sped anon.
- There was my Lady so with gladness filled, 94
 when to the splendour of this sphere she came,
 that all the planet with her light was thrilled.
- And if that star smiled with a brighter flame, 97
 how was it with me who am mutable
 even in the nature of my mortal frame ?
- As in a quiet fish-pond, pure and still, 100
 the fishes draw to what is dropped therein,
 deeming it something sent their mouths to fill,
- A thousand glories saw we then begin 103
 to gather round us, and from all we heard,
 "Lo, one from whom we further love shall win."
- And as to us they came, each one appeared 106
 so filled with happiness that their inward light
 shone, ever brightening softly as they neared.
- Think, Reader, if what I began to write 109
 no further went, what longing agony
 would you endure to know the fact aright.
- Now shall you for yourself learn presently 112
 how the desire increased in me to know
 from each his history as they came nigh.

PARADISO

“ O happy born, unto whom grace doth show 115
the Thrones of the eternal triumph here,
before your time of warfare you forego,
Light, that is spread through all heaven’s atmosphere, 118
enkindles us. We would that it may be
even as you wish, to your mind, too, made clear.”
Thus one of those kind spirits spoke to me : 121
and Beatrice said, “ Speak, speak, nor be afraid,
trust him as though he were a deity.”
“ Truly I see how you your nest have made 124
in your own light, for through your eyes it shines,
and is in all your happy smile conveyed.
I know you not, nor what command confines 127
your spirit in this sphere which from man’s sight
its glory in another’s beams enshrines.”
Thus did I speak directly to that light 130
which first had spoken to me, and its glow
of splendour deepened and became more bright.
Even as the Sun’s rays more effulgent grow 133
and hide him when the heat has eaten into
the veiling of the thickening mists below,
With joy’s increase the blessed figure grew 136
invisible with brightness, thus enclosed
and hid, he answered me as now to you
In this my following song will be disclosed. 139

PARADISO. CANTO VI

“When Constantine the Roman Eagle led 1
 back 'gainst heaven's course which, in the hero's
 wake
 who took Lavinia, it had followèd,
 Two hundred years and more saw God's bird make 4
 the extremest bounds of Europe his abode,
 near hills whence first he rose his flight to take :
 From out the shadow of its wings there flowed 7
 power on the world : from hand to hand it ran
 till, after many a change, on me bestowed.
 Caesar I was, I am Justinian, 10
 who by the will of Primal Love, still felt,
 freed from defect and flaw the Laws of man.
 And ere with that great work my mind had dealt, 13
 one nature and no more in Christ I knew,
 and in that faith I long contented dwelt.
 To blessed Agapetus is it due, 16
 chief Shepherd then, that, by his argument
 I was converted to the faith more true.
 Him I believed ; as truly evident 19
 his doctrine as that contradictories
 hold true and false alike in their content.
 As soon as with the Church my energies 22
 moved pace by pace, it pleased God to inspire
 that work which claimed all my activities.
 To Belisarius I gave entire 25
 control of arms, with whom heaven's right hand
 wrought
 so well, it gave me signal to retire.
 Now here is answer given to what you sought 28
 in my reply, but ere the theme I quit
 these your conditions lead to further thought.
 That you may notice with what reason fit 31
 the sacred standard is by him assailed
 who seizes it, and him who fights with it—
 See how its virtue has on it entailed 34
 that reverence which began when Pallas died
 that through all time its triumph might be hailed.

PARADISO

To Alba came the eagle to abide 37
 for thrice a hundred years and more, until
 three fought for it whom other three defied.
 After the Sabine women suffered ill, 40
 seven Kings, until Lucretia's sorrow, reigned,
 bringing the neighbouring tribes beneath their will.
 You know by chosen Romans 'twas sustained 43
 against the arms of Brennus and Pyrrhus too.
 war was on many a prince and state maintained :
 Torquatus thence and Quinctius,—his name due 46
 to hair untended,—Decii, Fabii
 this fame, that I embalm thus gladly, drew.
 It tamed the pride of Arab soldiery 49
 that followed Hannibal o'er the Alpine height
 whence, Po, you fall adown to seek the sea.
 Scipio and Pompey in their youth made fight 52
 beneath that standard, and where you had birth
 it filled the hilly slope with sore affright.
 Then at the time when heaven desired that earth 55
 within its peace serene should all be brought
 at Rome's own bidding Caesar bore it forth.
 Then what from Var even to the Rhine it wrought 58
 Isère and Arar know, as does the Seine
 and vales whence tribute-waves the Rhone have sought.
 What followed when he left Ravenna's plain 61
 and leapt the Rubicon, was such a flight
 as tongue or pen will try to tell in vain.
 Towards Spain the standard wheeled its conquering
 might,
 then to Durazzo, and Pharsalia's blow 65
 seemed even on the hot Nile to alight.
 Once more Antandrus town and Simois' flow 67
 it saw, its cradle, and where Hector lies,
 then plumed itself to wreak on Ptolemy woe :
 On Juba, like the lightning from the skies 70
 it fell, then turned it to your West again
 hearing the sound of Pompey's trumpets rise.
 Brutus and Cassius, in infernal pain 73
 now howl by what the next who bore it wrought,
 Modena and Perugia join the strain.

PARADISO

- To grief, too, wretched Cleopatra brought 76
 flying before it, death both swift and grim
 from the fell poison of a viper sought.
- With him it flew along the Red Sea's rim 79
 bringing a peace so deep that Janus found
 his Temple closed and bolted upon him.
- But all the achievements of this sign renowned 82
 I speak of, both old memories which endure
 and later triumphs in the realms it owned,
- Seem all of smaller worth and more obscure 85
 when it in the third Caesar's hand we see
 with our eyes clear and our affection pure :
- For Living Justice, which inspireth me, 88
 in his hand gave the glory to this sign,
 the means of His avenging wrath to be.
- Now mark a wonder in these words of mine, 91
 with Titus did it haste to wreak again
 on vengeance for old sin vengeance condign.
- And when the Lombard's wounding tooth was fain 94
 to bite into the Holy Church, its wings
 were spread to save by conquering Charlemagne.
- Now you may judge these men and weigh the things 97
 I speak of to their blame, these sins of theirs
 which are the cause of all your sufferings.
- Now o'er the people's flag one faction rears 100
 the yellow lilies, one to party bends
 their force, I know not which more base appears.
- Ah, let the Ghibelines follow out their ends 103
 under some other flag, for evilly
 acts he who justice from that ensign rends.
- And let not this new Charles its enemy be 106
 with these his Guelfs, but let him fear the claws
 that slay a lion mightier than he.
- To weep their father's sin children have cause 109
 often, let him not think that God will deign
 to place their lilies where His standard was.
- This little star its beauty does maintain 112
 from spirits good, who in their actions strove
 that they to fame and honour might attain.

PARADISO

- And when desires thus bend aside, true love 115
must needs less rigorously glow and send
its light with fainter liveliness above.
- In measuring the rewards, which here attend 118
our merits, partly lies our happiness,
for their true measure we can comprehend.
- Whence living Justice comes to us to bless 121
all our affections, so that never here
does malice cause disturbance or distress.
- As mingled voices make one harmony clear 124
beneath, our seats of life are mingled so
that they make music in each turning sphere.
- And in this pearl the light of Romeo 127
shines, whose life's work, so beautiful and great
nothing, alas! but poor reward could show.
- But the Provençals, with their jealous hate 130
now laugh not; wretched his estate is seen
who, injuring a good man, meets like fate.
- Four daughters, and each one of them a Queen, 133
had Raymond Berenger, and Romeo
wrought this, who had a lowly stranger been.
- Then evil tales began to come and go, 136
Raymond was urged a reckoning to demand
which twelve for every ten thus asked could show.
- This Romeo, poor and old, from out that land 139
wandered away. If the great heart he bore
when begging crusts, the world could understand,
Much as it lauds him, it would laud him more." 142

PARADISO CANTO VII

- “ *Hosanna sanctus Deus Sabaoth* 1
superillustrans claritate tua
felices ignes horum malahoth !”
- So, murmuring over the old notes he knew 4
 I heard that being sing upon whose head
 the shining lights were doubled to the view.
- With others then a joyful dance he led, 7
 and, like quick sparks that rapidly arise,
 suddenly all beyond my vision sped.
- “ Speak to her,” said I, though dubieties 10
 rose in my mind, “ Speak to my Lady, speak,
 who such sweet sippings to my thirst supplies.”
- That reverence which ever made me weak 13
 and timid even at hearing BE or ICE,
 bowed down my head like those who slumber seek.
- And Beatrice, with but a brief delay, 16
 began to speak, casting that smile on me
 that would make blest one who in torment lay.
- “ My inward thought’s infallibility 19
 tells me that now your mind is wondering how,
 on vengeance just, just vengeance there can be.
- But I will solve your difficulties now, 22
 so, hearken, for the words expressed by me
 on you a grave pronouncement will bestow.
- Because, even for his good, the activity 25
 of will he curbed not who no birth had known,
 he damned himself and all his progeny :
- Hence, sick on earth, in errors of its own 28
 the human race for many ages lay,
 until the Word of God pleased to come down
- Where that weak nature that had gone astray 31
 from its Creator, by eternal love
 He drew, united with Himself to stay.
- Now with my words let your attention move. 34
 this nature with its Maker so combined
 was pure and good as it came from above.

PARADISO

But as it from the path of truth declined 37
 and from its own life's way, for that alone
 was banishment from Paradise assigned.
 So then, the Crucifixion, when 'tis known 40
 what nature thus was taken, seems to wound
 more justly than aught else so undergone :
 Even as no other outrage can be found 43
 so great, if we the Person suffering
 regard, with whom that nature was so bound.
 From one act came results so differing 46
 that God rejoiced at one death with the Jews :
 earth trembled whilst all heaven was opening.
 No longer, therefore, need your mind refuse 49
 the truth that on just vengeance in the end
 a just Court did avenging justice use.
 But now I see your mind appears to tend 52
 from thought to thought into a tangled skein,
 and waits for freedom longingly, so penned.
 You say, ' What I have heard my thoughts retain, 55
 but why God chose a method such as this
 for our salvation is not yet made plain.'
 My Brother, this decree still buried is 58
 from sight of all those whose intelligence
 love's flame has not yet ripened into bliss.
 As many seek this target, since its sense 61
 is little understood by him who aims,
 I give the reason for this preference.
 Goodness Divine, which jealousy disclaims, 64
 eternal beauties from its inner sheen
 displays, by shooting forth its sparkling flames.
 That which distils from out it, without mean 67
 is everlasting, its imprint remains
 immovable when it once stamped has been.
 That which immediately down from it rains 70
 is absolutely free, and not controlled
 by anything that power of change contains.
 Most pleasing are those things which it can hold 73
 most like itself : the sacred glow on all
 lives most on what is shaped in its own mould.

PARADISO

In all these points advantaged we may call the human creature ; if it fail in one, from its nobility it needs must fall.	76
The cause of such default is Sin alone, which makes it less alike to Supreme Good, so that from it the brightest light is gone :	79
Its former dignity it never could attain again, unless it fill this space with penance just for pleasure's evil mood.	82
Your nature, thus, when all the human race sinned in its primal seed, these dignities lost, as in Paradise its happy place.	85
Nor could these be attained again, he sees who studies keenly, by another way than using either of these passages :—	88
Either that God the Sin aside should lay out of His gentleness, or that mankind should for his folly in his person pay.	91
On the Abyss of the Eternal Mind fix now your eye, let it as closely scan as may be, what in these my words you find.	94
Within his own contracted limits man could never satisfy by humbleness or late obedience what fell deeper than	97
His hopes rose in rebellious excess. this is the reason why no power had he his Sin by his own penance to redress.	100
Therefore it needed that God's ways should be the means of giving back man's primal state, by one of these or both collectively.	103
But, since a deed that most does indicate the kindness of the heart from which it flows, most gratitude and pleasure will create,	106
Goodness Divine, of which the whole world shows the imprint, in all ways deignèd to proceed that your fallen race might rise from out its woes :	109
Ne'er was, on either, nor shall be, indeed, betwixt the last night and the first of days, procedure so magnificent decreed.	112

PARADISO

- God was more generous, truly, thus to raise 115
man to a height sufficient to atone,
than simply his transgressions to erase.
All ways fall short of justice but that one, 118
that to the flesh of our humanity
should be humiliated God's own Son.
Now, to fulfil all your desire, let me 121
go back another passage to expound,
that it, as clear as I do, you may see.
You say, ' I see the water and the ground, 124
the fire, the air, and all their minglings reach
swift to decay, and are no longer found :
Yet were they all created, if my speech 127
to you be true, and therefore should have been
secure from such corruption, all and each.'
Brother, the Angels and the pure demesne 130
in which you are, created truly were
even as they are, in all their being, seen.
The elements, to which your words refer, 133
are such as may be said to have been made
by creatures who this power can transfer.
Created were the substances displayed 136
in each, and the informing virtue set
in all the circling stars round them arrayed.
The life of brutes and plants they only get 139
from sacred lights and movements in the sky
which with their inward potencies have met.
But your existence comes immediately 142
from Highest Goodness, which attracts its love
towards Itself for ever from on high.
Further, from all that I have said above, 145
your resurrection you may well infer
considering what man's flesh and fashioning prove
When our first parents both created were." 148

PARADISO CANTO VIII

The world was wont while it in peril lay
to think that from the Cyprian fair there came,
from the third epicycle, love's wild ray.
In times of ignorance arose the flame
of sacrifice, and votive prayers were said
by ancient folk not only to that Dame
But to Dionè and to Cupid, led
to honour her as mother, him as son,—
on Dido's lap they say once cherishèd :
From her with whom my song has thus begun
they took that star's name which, alternately
with back of head or eyebrow, woos the Sun.
No sense of rising into it had I
but knew it was so, seeing that more fair
my Lady seemed to grow as we drew nigh.
As in a flame a sparkling may appear,
and, in a voice, another be discerned,
one steadfast, and one moving here and there,
So saw I that within the light there burned
torches, that moved in circle, swift and slow,
in measure from their deathless vision learned.
From the cold cloud ne'er falls the drifting snow
or viewless blast so quickly as 'twould seem
other than soft or lingeringly to flow
To one who saw these torches, as their gleam
advanced from out that heavenly circle of light
began amid the lofty Seraphim.
And among those who first came into sight
' *hosanna* ' sounded with so sweet a tone,
still do I long to hear it if I might.
Then did one come, and speaking all alone,
said, " All of us by the single wish are led
to please you in whatever may be done.
We who with heavenly Princes thus have sped
in one Ring, with one thirst, one motion bound,
to whom, from out the earth, you sometime said,

PARADISO

'Ye by whose wit the third heaven makes its round,' 37
 so full of love are we, that, you to please,
 a little rest may grateful now be found."
 Then when my eyes I lifted up from these, 40
 casting them on my Lady reverently,
 and she had given them full assurances,
 Back to the light I looked which had near by 43
 itself so largely offered, in a tone
 of love, "Say, who are you?" arose my cry.
 And lo, I saw it suddenly had grown 46
 greater in power and kind, even as I spoke,
 full of some gladness added to its own.
 Thus it with brighter ray the silence broke: 49
 "short space had I on earth. Ills will be done
 of which, with time, I might have turned the stroke.
 Hidden from you am I by joy alone, 52
 concealed by blinding rays as though I were
 a worm meshed in the silk that it has spun.
 You loved me much and rightly: and if there 55
 below for longer time had been my stay,
 more than love's leaves would have begun to appear.
 That left bank, which the Rhone laves on its way 58
 past where the Sorga joins, and all below,
 once waited for the coming of my sway:
 So did the Ausonian corner where outflow 61
 Tronto and Verdè, down to where you may
 by Bari, Gaeta, and Catona go.
 Upon my brow the crown I could display 64
 of that land which the Danube waters where
 from German boundaries it moves away,
 And where in shadow dark Trinacria fair 67
 between Pachino and Peloro lies
 by seas that most the wrath of Eurys bear,
 (Not from Typhoeus, but sulphurous fumes that rise,)
 her Kings, were now of blood that from me flows 71
 in Charles' and Rudolf's royal families;
 If evil rule, which can but grief impose 73
 on subject peoples, had not pressed until
 the shout of 'Die, die,' from Palermo rose.

P A R A D I S O

And had my brother owned prophetic skill, 76
 in time he would have left the dearth and greed
 of Catalonia, lest it worked him ill :
 For him and for another there was need 79
 that his already overladen boat
 from further heavy burdens should be freed.
 His nature from a source of such high note 82
 falling, had needed soldiery not prone
 o'er filling of their chests alone to gloat."
 "Sire, for that I believe this joyful tone, 85
 with which your speaking fills me, is by you
 drawn from where good things are brought forth alone
 And end, it is more pleasing ; and this, too, 88
 is dear to me, that such a truth you find
 by looking unto God as now you do.
 Glad have you made me, now make clear my mind 91
 of certain doubts that from your words arise,
 how bitter grown from a sweet seed we find."
 So spoke I to him. " If, in any wise," 94
 he answered, " I can make one truth appear,
 what now is hidden will stand before your eyes.
 The Good, which all the realm which you tread here
 turns and supplies, makes of its providence 98
 power in the body of each mighty sphere.
 Not only come, from such Beneficence 100
 which is Perfection, natures differing,
 their welfare also is secure from thence.
 Whatever bolts this bow sends from the string 103
 fall therefore, each one in its destined place,
 as arrows, well shot, to the target wing.
 Else were the skies, through which your way you trace,
 so fashioned that in viewing their effects 107
 not works of Art, but ruins, would you face.
 This could not be, unless there were defects 109
 within the intellects which move each sphere,
 and in the Mind which formed these intellects.
 Would you that more light on this truth appear ? " 112
 then I, " Nay, 'tis impossible to me
 nature should want for any needful gear."

PARADISO

He said, "To you less happy would he be if man a citizen on earth were not?"	115
"yea," I replied, "that is a certainty."	
"And can that be unless a different lot each has, and diverse offices are filled? so is it if the truth your Master wrote."	118
To this point came he by deduction skilled, and so arrived at the conclusion:	121
"on diverse bases man his works may build;	
So is one Solon, one is Xerxes, one Melchisedec, and yet another, he who, by his winging upwards, lost his son.	124
The circling nature, whose imprint we see upon our mortal wax, doth art apply rightly, whatever lodging there may be.	127
Thus Esau far from Jacob seems to lie. even in conception Romulus is assigned to Mars, though base his real paternity.	130
Nature begotten ever is confined to tread the path of its begetter, save where Providence has otherwise designed.	133
What lay behind, now full in front you have. but that my joy in you may well be known wrap round you this corollary, I crave.	136
That Nature, where her fortune has been thrown discordant, like all other vagrant seed, out of its place but poor results has shown.	139
And if the world down there gave but good heed to Nature's lead, in following it amain, it might have pleasure in its folk, indeed.	142
But, to religious living you constrain him who was born to buckle on a sword, one born to preach as King is called to reign;	145
Thus, with the road, your track does not accord."	148

PARADISO CANTO IX

Fair Clemence, when on me your Charles had shed 1
 such light, he told me of each fraud and lie
 into whose toils his progeny were led :
 Yet said he, " Peace, and let the years go by." 4
 naught can I say but that some sorrow meet
 attends the track of your calamity.
 That sacred light had now turned round to greet 7
 the Sun that filled it so, which, ever thus,
 is ample all things wanting to complete.
 Ah, souls deceived, and creatures impious, 10
 who from the good so wrench your hearts, and so
 gaze steadily on actions frivolous !
 Another of those lights with kindling glow 13
 approached me, growing brighter outwardly
 as if his wish to please me he would show.
 The eyes of Beatrice, still fixed on me 16
 as formerly, her dear consent conveyed
 to what she saw my strong desire to be.
 " Now let response to this my wish be made, 19
 o blessed spirit," I said, " and prove that I
 in you may find my mirrored thought displayed."
 Then did the light which thus first met my eye 22
 from depths wherefrom its singing rose but now,
 speak as in kindness acting joyfully :
 " In that Italian land so base and low 25
 on, past Rialto, where, on the other hand,
 the springs of Brenta and Piavè flow,
 Rises a gentle hill, from which a brand 28
 in times not long ago came flaming down
 making a fierce attack upon the land.
 With it the selfsame origin I own ; 31
 Cunizza was I called, and here I shine
 because this star's light had me quite o'erthrown.
 Gladly I hold the fortune that is mine ; 34
 my lot does no ways grieve me, which may seem
 to your low people but a heartless sign.

PARADISO

- For to this dear and shining gem whose beam 37
 nearest to me in heaven makes its home
 great fame remains : and ere it cease to gleam
- Five times shall men this centenary sum. 40
 must not men shape their lives, till they be crowned
 with life succeeding that from which they come ?
- Where Tagliamento and Adigè bound 43
 the land, the people care not, they who, though
 sore-smitten, yet are not repentant found.
- But soon 'twill come that Padua's pools, below, 46
 shall change the hue they by Vicenza bear,
 because they shall forget their duty so.
- Where Silè flows into Cagnano, there, 49
 one lords it now and holds his head on high
 for whom, already, they a net prepare.
- And Feltro, wailing, yet aloud shall cry 52
 over her priest, of such an impious stain :
 no crime to Malta comes of such deep dye.
- Too large must be the bowl that would contain 55
 Ferrara's blood, and he might wearied be
 who ounce by ounce its weight should ascertain,
- Which this most courteous priest will give that he 58
 may seem a partisan,—such things are all
 conform to rule in this vicinity.
- Mirrors there are above us which you call 61
 thrones, whence God's judgments down on us are shed
 so that these words approved we may let fall."
- She ceased, and turned as though now interested 64
 in other matters, joining in the round
 wherein she formerly a dance had led.
- That other gladness, which she deemed renowned, 67
 shone like a glorious ruby which with ray
 of sudden splendour has the sunshine found.
- Joy makes a brightness there as smiles display 70
 our gladness here, but sorrow brings its shade
 with us, and sad minds take the light away.
- "God seeth everything : your sight," I said, 73
 "o blessed spirit is all sunk in Him,
 so that unknown by you no wish is made.

PARADISO

Why, therefore, doth your voice with its glad hymn 76
 rejoicing heaven,—with the holy choirs
 of all the six-wing-cowlèd Seraphim,—
 Not deign to give response to my desires ? 79
 I had not waited on your prayer thus long
 were I in you, as mine your soul inspires.”
 “The greatest valley all whose track along 82
 the waters spread,” his speech was thus begun,
 “save ocean, which round all the earth is flung,
 Between its fronting shores, against the Sun 85
 so far extends that what horizon then
 seemed, now into meridian has run.
 Of this long valley was I denizen, 88
 ’twixt Ebro’s stream and where the Macra’s line
 divides the Genoese and Tuscan men.
 Almost the same sunsets and day-dawns shine 91
 on Buggea and the place from which I came,
 whose blood once made all warm its harbour’s brine.
 Folco they called me then who knew my name, 94
 and this heaven bears my stamp, as I, indeed,
 bear ever its imprint upon my frame.
 Not Belus’ daughter, who by wicked deed 97
 injured Sicheus and Creüsa too,
 burned more than I while love-locks graced my head:
 Nor yet that Rhodopeian maiden who 100
 was wronged by Demophoön, nay, nor yet
 Alcides’ heart when Iole’s love he knew.
 We do not here repent, but smile, nor let 103
 our minds dwell on forgotten sin, but love
 the power that has all things in order set.
 Here see we Art which all effects can move 106
 to beauty, and here, too, the Good which brings
 again the low world to the world above.
 But that you may bear with you all the things 109
 that you desire within this lofty sphere,
 I needs must yet extend my communings.
 You wish to know that light which, by me here, 112
 sparkles, as though it were a ray of sun
 reflected from some water pure and clear.

PARADISO

Now know that therein Rahab has begun	115
her peaceful stay within our order, she	
the imprint of our highest rank has won.	
For to this heaven, which the extremity	118
of your earth's shadow touches, was she ta'en	
the first of all souls at Christ's victory.	
And well it was that she should thus remain	121
within some heaven to be a trophy sweet	
of victory won by both His palms in pain,	
Because she favoured Joshua's first feat	124
in conquering the Holy Land, a tale	
from the Pope's memory all but delete.	
Your City,—work of him who dared to assail	127
his Maker with turned shoulder, jealousy	
from whom derived has caused so great a wail,—	
Grows the cursed flower, and spreads it liberally	130
tempting aside the sheep and lambs, for, lo,	
the very shepherd seems a wolf to be.	
The Gospel and Great Doctors none now know,	133
only on the Decretals do they pore	
in study, as their crowded margins show.	
In them the Pope and Cardinals gather lore	136
by eager toil, and Nazareth's humble home,	
where Gabriel spread his pinions, they ignore.	
Soon to the Vatican and the graves in Rome	139
held sacred, of the soldiery who fought	
following Peter, happier days shall come,	
Setting them free from this adulterous blot."	142

PARADISO

'Twas Beatrice who this quick change had wrought 37
 from good to better, and so suddenly,
 her act through time itself extended not.

How gloriously shining must that be 40
 which, entering even within the Sun's own light,
 by light, and not by colour, could I see !

Art, use and intellect although I cite, 43
 I cannot to your mind this image lend :
 believe it therefore, and in it delight.

If our low fancy we can not extend 46
 to such an exaltation, marvel not ;
 never was eye that could the Sun transcend.

Here, then, to the Fourth Family was I brought 49
 where the great Father satisfies its need,
 showing the Spirit breathed, the Son begot.

And Beatrice began, " Give thanks, indeed, 52
 give thanks to Him who is the angels' Sun
 whose grace you to this Sun of sense could lead."

Of all the hearts of men there ne'er was one 55
 so set upon devotion and to prove
 that all its happiness lay in God alone,

As was mine at these words, and all my love 58
 so fixed and centered was in Him, that e'en
 Beatrice it into oblivion drove.

She was not pained thereby : when I had seen 61
 the lovely splendour of her laughing eyes
 my mind was parted many things between.

Full many a living light in conquering guise 64
 circled around us like a crown : more sweet
 sounded their song than shone their radiancies.

So round Latona's daughter there may meet 67
 a circle, when the impregnate air retains
 the woven threads that form her girdle's pleat.

That heavenly Court, from which I come, contains 70
 full many a jewel beautiful and dear
 which I can never draw from its domains :

The song of those great lights was such, I fear, 73
 that he, who will not plume him there to fly
 can only hope news from the dumb to hear.

PARADISO

- When, with that singing sweet, continually 76
 three times around us had those suns revolved
 like stars around the poles fixed in the sky,
 They seemed as ladies, in the dance involved, 79
 who pause, not finished, but intent to hear
 the tune renewed, to trip again resolved.
 Within one light a voice then reached my ear,— 82
 “whenas the ray of grace, whereof is born
 true love that, loving, does more strong appear
 And multiplies, in you so seems to burn 85
 that up it leads you by that stair none e’er
 descends but with the purpose to return ;
 Who to the thirst expressed in such a prayer, 88
 the wine from out his vial would deny,
 were bound like stream that does not seaward fare.
 Fain would you learn the flowers which beautify 91
 this garland which encircles the fair Dame
 who gives you strength and power to mount thus high.
 From out the flock of Dominic I came, 94
 the pious flock he leads where by the way
 they fatten well who stray not from the same.
 He to my right my brother many a day 97
 and Master, Albert of Cologne, and I,
 Thomas, whose birthplace in Aquino lay.
 If others you would know, then let your eye 100
 follow my words along this shining row
 of blessèd lights which wreathed around you lie.
 In this next flame the smile of Gratian know, 103
 who to both laws such worthy aid supplied
 as even made Paradise its joy to show.
 The other is that Peter, he who vied, 106
 with the poor widow in her offering made
 and did his all to Holy Church confide.
 The fifth and fairest of these lights displayed 109
 breathes ever with such love, that all below
 thirst for the news of it to be conveyed.
 Within it is that mighty mind whereto 112
 was joined such wisdom that, if truth be true,
 no second rose its equal e’er to show.

PARADISO

- See, near at hand, that shining taper too 115
 which, when in flesh, most deeply understood
 the life angelic and its service knew.
- Then, in that little gleam of laughing mood, 118
 the advocate of Christianity
 see, who to Augustine as helper stood.
- Now if you have directed your mind's eye 121
 from light to light, following my words of praise
 you for the eighth will long expectantly.
- In seeing all the good the world displays 124
 this sainted soul is glad, while it lays bare
 to him who hears, all its deceitful ways.
- The body from whose bonds 'twas forced to fare 127
 lies low in Cieldauro : exile past,
 and martyrdom, it comes this place to share.
- The flaming breath of Isidore is cast 130
 from the next light : see Bede, and Richard, too,
 who in deep thinking human power surpassed.
- That one, from whom to me you turn your view, 133
 the light is of a spirit who, in thought
 deep plunged, too slowly to death's portal drew.
- It is the light of Sigier, hither brought 136
 to shine eternal : in the Straw Street, he,
 a logic that gained only hatred, taught."
- Then as the clock-bell chiming solemnly, 139
 awakes the Spouse of God to matin song
 to Him that He may love her constantly,
- Drawing or beating with so sweet a tongue 142
 its '*tin, tin,*' softly calling, that the soul
 well ordered, feels its love grow deep and strong,
- So did I see that glorious Circle roll 145
 re-echoing voice to voice in harmony
 and music sweet heard only where the whole
- Of joy is to rejoice eternally. 148

PARADISO CANTO XI

O cares insensate of our mortal race ! 1
how feeble are the arguments which draw
your wings down fluttering to a lower place !
Here was one mortal following the law, 4
one wise in medicine, and one a priest,
one keen by force or fraud to overawe,
One plundered, one by bargaining increased 7
his store, one was in fleshly pleasures drowned,
and one himself to slothful ease addressed :
While I, in all these things no longer bound, 10
here and with Beatrice, thus gloriously
aloft in heaven had such a welcome found.
When each, in circling round had come to be 13
at that same point at which he had begun,
as taper in a candle-stick stood he.
Among these lights, I felt, within that one 16
which spoke to me, a smiling, as it were,
beginning as more brightly still it shone :
“ I gaze into the eternal light, and there 19
even in its rays, I seem to apprehend
whence the occasion of your thoughts you bear.
You question and would gladly know the trend 22
and purpose of my speech in open words
that to the level of your knowledge bend ;
Two sentences my former speech records, 25
‘ *they fatten well*,’ and then, ‘ *No second rose*,’
room for distinction their import affords.
The Providence whose rule the world well knows,—
with counsel by which every creature’s thought 29
is checked ere it to the foundation goes,—
That to her gladness might the spouse be brought 31
to Him to whom espousal with loud cry
and shedding of His sacred blood was wrought,
Secure in her own self, more faithfully 34
to serve Him made two Princes who should move
with her as guides on whom she might rely.

PARADISO

The one was all seraphic in his love, 37
 the other by his wisdom to this earth
 brought down cherubic splendour from above.
 Of one alone I speak, for who sets forth 40
 the praise of either both extols, for one
 the purpose of their actions and their worth.
 Between Tupino and the streams, which run 43
 down from the hill of blest Ubaldo's choice,
 a fertile slope the mountain looks upon :
 Perugia, cold may chill, or heat rejoice 46
 from Porta Sole, and behind, weighed down
 Gualdo and Nocera mourn with wailing voice.
 Upon that slope where steepness least is shown 49
 was born into the world a sun like this
 whose light at times is from the Ganges thrown.
 And he who names *Ascesi* ¹ speaks amiss 52
 and curtly : let him more correctly say
 the Orient,—that its true meaning is.
 Not far yet had he from his dawn made way 55
 when he began to make the whole world know
 some comfort from the power that in him lay.
 He, early in his youth, began to show, 58
 against his father's wish, love to a Dame
 from whom no joy, more than from Death, could flow.
 Into his spiritual Court he came, 61
 and there, *et coram patre*, were they wed ;
 thenceforward burned more warmly his love's flame.
 Widowed of her first Spouse, she numberèd 64
 more than a thousand and a hundred years
 unsought till he came, and unhonourèd :
 And nought availed it that the story bears 67
 how she was housèd with Amyclas found
 by him whose voice filled all the earth with fears :
 And nought availed it for her to be bound 70
 upon the Cross, in faith and constancy
 with Christ, while Mary wept upon the ground.
 But, lest I strive to speak too covertly, 73
 take it that Poverty and Francis stood
 as wedded lovers, now named openly.

¹ A play on *Ascesi*, 'I rose.'

PARADISO

- Their concord, and their smiles in lightsome mood 76
 made love and wonder and sweet looks the spring
 ever in them of pious thoughts and good.
- This made the venerable Bernard fling 79
 his sandals from him, and so quickly run
 to join them while he mourned his tarrying.
- O riches all unknown, good works well done ! 82
 barefoot Egidius and Sylvester, too,
 followed the Spouse, the bride so sweetly shone.
- Thence went he forth, father and master true, 85
 with his dear wife, and with that family,
 who round them each the humble cincture drew :
- Nor was he weighed down with humility 88
 that he was Pietro Bernardonè's son,
 nor that he was despised so marvellously.
- But royally, to Innocent on his throne 91
 he showed stern purpose, and from him obtained
 the first great seal to his religion.
- When the poor people round about him strained 94
 to follow and his marvellous life fulfil,
 which songs of heaven had more meetly gained,
- Then was this holy Archimandrite's will 97
 crowned with a second diadem wherein
 Honorius did the eternal breath instil.
- And when he dared his preaching to begin 100
 of Christ and His disciples, even before
 the Soldan, thirsting martyrdom to win,
- Finding that no good fruit his efforts bore— 103
 amid their obduracy all in vain—
 he turned again to the Italian shore.
- On a rough rock, of Christ did he obtain, 106
 'twixt Arno and the Tiber, signs which lay
 for two years on his limbs imprintèd plain.
- When He who chose him thus called him away 109
 to gain that prize which he so well had won,
 in that he did such lowliness display,
- To these, his brethren, he his dearest One 112
 left as to rightful heritors, and prayed
 that love to her might by them all be shown :

PARADISO

And from her bosom that illustrious shade passed to the realm of his beatitude : he would no other bier were for him made.	115
Think now what he was who as colleague stood to steer the barque of Peter to its goal aright, on through the ever-deepening flood,	118
Such was our Patriarch. Who will enroll beneath his leadership, as you will see, with the best merchandise supplies his soul.	121
But yet so greedy seems his flock to be of newer herbage that they needs must stray through many another pasture diversely ;	124
And ever as they wander far away from where he is, so do they all come back, emptier of milk, foldwards, at fall of day.	127
Yet some there are who, fearing for this lack, cleave by their shepherd, yet so few they are small cloth would furnish cowls for all the pack.	130
Now, if my words have not been faint and bare, and if your listening has been well applied, if you recall my former words with care,	133
In part your wishes will be satisfied, seeing the plant of which they form a spray, and the rebuke within those words implied,	136
‘ They fatten well who stray not from the way.’ ”	139

PARADISO CANTO XII

As soon as with these final words grew still
that blessed flame, there instantly began
a new revolving of the sacred mill,
Which in its turning had not reached full span,
when lo, another, circling, closed it round
and with like motion and like singing ran :
Singing which in these dulcet voices' sound
surpassed all earthly Muse or Siren's song,
as light the faint reflex wherein 'tis found.
As two great bows the thin-drawn mists along
are thrown, like-hued and parallel, whene'er
Juno so orders her handmaiden young,
The outer born of that within,—as air
caught the love-wasted nymph's words' dying sound,
melted as mists in sunshine disappear,—
From which mankind foretold, on certain ground,
by compact between God and Noah made,
that ne'er again the world should be so drowned,
So did these roses, that can never fade,
garland us with a double ring. The last
to that within responsive glow displayed.
When as the dancing and the gladsome feast
of singing and of flashing light on light,
as each on each a joyful radiance cast,
Ceased at a point, as though some will aright
calmed them, as eyes, which are by pleasure drawn,
open and close again the gates of sight,
From out the heart of one that newly shone
a voice moved that made me a needle keen
to point towards the star it gazes on.
And it began, " Love that in me is seen
as beauty, bids me speak of the other guide
by whom my own so gently praised has been.
'Tis right that they together should abide,
one in their warfare, so their glory may
in such fair union be intensified,

P A R A D I S O

Christ's army, which to furnish for the fray 37
 cost dear, behind his flag in laggard train
 came slowly, fearfully and in thin array.
 Then did the Emperor of eternal reign 40
 care for his soldiers thus in peril housed,
 through grace which they unworthy were to gain.
 And as was said, her whom He had espoused 43
 He succoured with two champions, at whose deeds
 and words the squadrons' scattered ranks were closed.
 There, where sweet Zephyr, blowing o'er the meads, 46
 openeth the youngling leaves which, spreading wide
 o'er Europe, clothe her even as she needs,
 Not far from where there falls the thundering tide, 49
 behind whose far-flung reaches even the sun
 does from the eyes of men his splendour hide,
 Sits Calahorra, her protection 52
 the great escutcheon where the lion here
 yields, and there, has the place of triumph won.
 There saw the light of day that sweetheart dear 55
 unto the Christian Faith,—her athlete blessed,
 kind to his friends, and to his foes austere ;
 Even ere his birth, his mind was so impressed 58
 with living virtue that his mother knew
 that she from him prophetic power possessed.
 When at the Font espousals were gone through 61
 between him and the Faith, they giving dower
 each to the other of salvation true,
 The dame, who held him in his christening hour, 64
 saw in a dream the fruit that yet would flow
 from him and from his heirs in marvellous shower ;
 And that men might even in his naming know 67
 his nature, did, from here, a spirit move
 his friends to call the child Dominico.
 Named so of God in whom was all his love. 70
 I speak of him as one by Christ elect
 as husbandman his garden to improve.
 He seemed indeed a messenger select 73
 and friend of Christ, for his first love he paid
 as Christ's first counsels to mankind direct.

PARADISO

And many a time his nurse had found him laid 76
 silent upon the ground, as who should say :
 ' behold, it was for this that I was made.'
 The father of him—Felix, truly !—yea 79
 his mother, too, Giovanna, ' Grace of the Lord ! '
 if such the meaning be, well named were they.
 He toiled not for that learning which is stored 82
 by followers of the Ostian, or who learn
 of Thaddaeus, but, for the true manna's hoard,
 Short time he took the name of sage to earn, 85
 such as about the vineyards go alway,
 that, with a slothful guard, soon mildewed turn.
 And to the seat which, once upon a day, 88
 was kinder to Christ's poor,—not it, indeed,—
 but he who sits there,—and now falls away,
 Not to give two or three for six, or meed 91
 of vacant place, nor for the *tithes, whose sum*
the poor have right to gather for their need,
 He made demand ; but for some leave therefrom 94
 to fight against the erring world, to guard
 the seed from which these twice twelve plants have
 come.
 Then both with doctrine and with will he warred, 97
 clothed with the apostolic office, on
 he rushed, like torrent from deep cleft unbarred,
 Against the heretics, like block and stone 100
 cumbering his course, and upon those that gave
 resistance most, his liveliest force was thrown.
 From him come many streamlets that still lave 103
 the Catholic garden and enrich its mould
 so that its plants with fuller foliage wave.
 If such one wheel on which the Chariot rolled 106
 wherein the Holy Church made her defence,
 and won her civil strife in battle bold,
 Clear to you now may seem the excellence 109
 shown by the other of its wheels whereto
 Thomas before made courteous reference.
 But now the track, which once that circle knew, 112
 deserted lies where went its highest rim,
 instead of crust there is but stale mildew.

PARADISO

His family, which walked straight after him 115
 pressing his footprints, now so turn about
 that each strikes each with backward moving limb.
 Soon shall the harvest come, and then, thrown out, 118
 the tares of this bad culture shall bemoan
 the barns filled, and themselves consumed without.
 I well believe that were our volume shown 121
 to some keen searcher, leaf by leaf, he might
 find on some page, 'I do as I have done.'
 Casalè, nay, nor Acquasparta write 124
 such texts, for in our scriptures one takes care
 to loose the rule, the other draws it tight.
 Buonaventura's soul am I, and fare 127
 from Bagnoregio, in great office I
 in left-hand practices would have no share.
 Illuminato and Augustino, nigh 130
 are to us here, who all unshod and poor,
 bound themselves with the cord to the Most High.
 Hugh also you may see, of Saint Victor, 133
 and Pietro Mangiadorè, Pietro, too,
 the Spaniard, who in twelve books spread his lore.
 Nathan the prophet, and Chrysostom who 136
 was Metropolitan, with Anselm stand,
 Donatus, also, who the first art knew.
 Rabanus is with us, and here at hand 139
 Calabria's abbot, Joachim, shines bright,
 who doth the power of prophesy command.
 To emulous speech of such a famous knight 142
 moved am I by the glowing courtesy
 of Thomas, and his praises erudite,—
 As are this company along with me." 145

PARADISO CANTO XIII

Let him imagine, who would fain behold 1
 what now I saw, (and like a rock the scene
 keep firm before him while my tale is told),
 Fifteen of those great stars which the serene 4
 brightness of heaven keeps glowing so that they
 pierce through, however dense the air has been.
 Let him imagine the great Wain by day 7
 and night upon the bosom of the sky
 obedient to its pole's directing sway ;
 Let him imagine the Horn's mouth on high 10
 from out the axle drawn, around which move
 heaven's primal wheelings everlastingly,
 Then to have made two signs in heaven above 13
 like Minos' daughter, when, with the first cold
 of Death's approach that crept on her, she strove .
 And one the other circling in its fold 16
 so turning that its rays were forward sent,
 while after it the other's glory rolled.
 So might he by that vision represent 19
 some shadow of the starry crown and dance
 two-fold, that with its radiance round me went.
 So much more rapid was its bright advance 22
 than aught with us, as is the whirling sphere
 to Chiana creeping through the swamp's expanse.
 No Bacchic song nor Paeon did I hear, 25
 but of Three Persons, joined in one, Divine,
 and God Incarnate, hymns rose high and clear.
 The songs and wheeling thus in glowing line 28
 those lights accomplished, when to us they turned,
 happy to some new duty to incline.
 Then, while in silence all their glories burned, 31
 the voice rose of that light from whom before
 I had the life of God's poor servant learned,
 And said, " When one sheaf garnered to the store 34
 has yielded all its grain, love calls on me
 to bear the other to the threshing-floor.

PARADISO

Into that breast, you deem, whose rib to be 37
 moulded into the fairest cheek was ta'en,
 whose palate cost us all our misery,
 And into that which by the lance's pain 40
 for future and for past so satisfied
 that turned against all sin the scales remain,
 Such light as human nature may abide 43
 was wholly by that mighty Power infused,
 which formed them both and to them life supplied.
 And so you marvel at the words I used 46
 before, in saying that no second rose
 to share the glow by the Fifth light diffused.
 Now mark my speech, for that which you suppose 49
 and what I say are joined in truth, as where
 a circle doth its centre point enclose.
 For mortal and immortal each does share 52
 a reflex of the Idea born to be
 a witness of the Father's love and care.
 That living Light, that from its source flows free 55
 and yet departs not from it, nor the Love
 that so united with Them makes Them Three,
 Collects its shining radiance from above, 58
 even as though glassed in nine existences
 yet in eternal unity doth move.
 Thence it descends to lower forms than these 61
 and down from act to act it goes, as cause
 of what are nought but brief contingencies.
 By such contingencies I mean what draws 64
 its form and life from seed, or if it be
 seedless, is due to planetary laws.
 Their wax conforms in different degree 67
 to that ideal stamp on it impressed
 and, 'neath it, varies in translucency :
 Whence comes it that one tree with fruit is blessed 70
 while one, the same in kind, fruits not, so you
 at birth of varying genius are possessed.
 Were but the wax formed finely through and through
 and were the stamp at its supremest force, 74
 the seal its highest brilliance would show.

PARADISO

- But Nature ever falters in her course 76
as does a painter, perfect in his skill,
when trembling hand will not his art endorse.
- Then, if the Primal Power do but instil 79
its Love there, and its perfect Vision leave,
the stamp is perfect and impeccable.
- Thus once did mortal clay the form receive 82
of animal perfection, worthy made,
and thus was caused the Virgin to conceive.
- Wherefore I share your thought if it be said 85
that human nature never bore, nor shall
bear, the imprint on those two persons laid.
- Now, if no further on I went at all, 88
‘how, then, was he we speak of without peer?’
I may expect to hear your questioning call.
- But, that what now is dark may yet be clear, 91
think what he was, and for what cause was moved
when he was bidden, ‘Let your choice appear.’
- So only do I speak to have it proved 94
that he was King, and wisdom fixed upon,
that he might fill that office as behoved.
- Not that the number truly should be known 97
of those who move above; or if ‘must’ flows
from ‘must’ and ‘may,’ in speech together thrown;
- Nor whether *primum motum* to suppose 100
is true, nor if a half circle can hold
a triangle that no right angle knows.
- So, if you note all that which I have told, 103
that peerless insight, which my thought would hit,
is prudence exercised in regal mould.
- And if the word ‘*arose*’ you study, it 106
is but for Kings, of whom so many be,
and so few do their kingdoms benefit.
- With this distinction take my words, and see 109
that they may well agree with your own thought
of our first sire and our Felicity.
- Let this like lead about your feet be wrought 112
to make you slower, like a wearied wight,
towards ‘no’ or ‘yes’ when comprehended not.

PARADISO

For low among the foolish is his plight	115
who, undistinguishing, denies, or dares	
affirm, nor case with case compares aright.	
Whence often doth it come our judgment bears	118
this way or that, and we to falsehood run,	
and then, our pride our intellect ensnares.	
Ah, worse than vainly is his course begun,	121
who leaves the shore to fish for truth without	
the art :—he comes again with nothing won.	
So to the world their folly pointed out	124
Parmenides, Melissus, Bryson, all	
the many who set forth, their goal in doubt.	
Sabellius too and Arius recall ;	127
fools were they and as swords to Scripture lore	
making straight faces unsymmetrical.	
Let not men yet be sure of all this store,	130
as he who would his ears of corn compute	
ere they the hue of fullest ripeness bore.	
For I have seen a bush with thorns acute	133
stretch out in spring its branches fierce and bare,	
yet the rose bloomed upon its topmost shoot :	
And I have seen a ship sail smooth and fair	136
through all her voyage, yet lost and overblown	
at harbour mouth, ere she had entered there.	
Then let not Bertha, let not Martin, shown	139
one acting as a thief, one offering all,	
think they are thus in heavenly will foreknown,	
For one may rise again, the other fall."	142

PARADISO CANTO XIV

Out from the centre to the furthest verge 1
 circles the water in a bowl, or runs
 from verge to centre as a blow may urge.
 This thought rose 'mid my meditations 4
 sudden, as the glorious soul of Thomas ceased
 to hold discourse amid those shining ones,
 Because of the similitude at least 7
 to his discourse and that of Beatrice,
 who thus to follow after him was pleased :
 " This man desires, although by no device 10
 of wish or thought can he his wish express,
 another explanation to entice.
 Tell him if all the radiances, which dress 13
 your substance as with flowers, will stay with you
 and everlastingly your being bless,
 And if they so remain, say how the view, 16
 once more made visible of what you were,
 may not make you with pain such change to rue."
 As by some gladness dancers all appear 19
 moved and drawn forward as they circle round
 and more of joy their voice and gestures bear,
 So, at that cry, so eager and profound, 22
 the sacred circles showed new happiness
 both in their turning and their song's glad sound.
 He who in death finds subject of distress 25
 in passing hither, the refreshment shed
 by the eternal shower cannot guess.
 The One and Two and Three of the Godhead 28
 who ever lives in Three and Two and One,
 uncircumscribed, yet over all things spread,
 Three times was sung in such a lovely tone 31
 by each of those bright spirits that a meed
 for any merit was that song alone.
 Then from the lesser ring I heard proceed 34
 a low voice from its purest light, as when
 the Angel called on Mary to give heed,

PARADISO

Answering : “ As long as each is denizen of Paradise and there makes festival, our love shall thus in light our being pen.	37
Its light shall equal our desire, and all our zeal be like our vision, that shall greet grace that on us, beyond desert, shall fall.	40
The saintèd glorious flesh shall be more meet wherein we shall be clothed, for in the end ourselves in everything shall be complete.	43
By this the highest Good on us shall send light all unearned by which we even may see Himself, and all His glory comprehend.	46
Wherefore the vision in intensity must grow, as shall the ardour therein bound, and the bright ray that from its light goes free.	49
But like the coal which spreads its flame around and with a fervent glow surpasses it so that its form is still all radiant found,	52
So shall this brightness with which we are lit seem conquered by that fleshly form which still within the bonds of lower earth is knit.	55
Nor shall that light have power to work us ill, for all our organs shall be strong and free our purposes of pleasure to fulfil.”	58
So eager seemed each chorus then to be to cry ‘ Amen,’ that truly did they seem to long again their mortal frames to see,	61
Not only their own bodies to redeem, but those of mothers, fathers, and all dear ere they were blent in the eternal gleam.	64
And, lo, a lustrous glow began to appear beyond even what shone there, even as the sky grows bright and brighter as the dawn is near.	67
And as the evening shadows first draw nigh and in the heavens new wonders come in sight and the eye doubts of their reality ;	70
So did I see a ring of loftier light formed all of newer beings come in view beyond the confines of those circles bright.	73

PARADISO

- O flaming of the Holy Breath, how grew 76
 its sudden glorious ray before my eyes
 that, conquered by it, from its light withdrew !
- But Beatrice then in such lovely guise 79
 smiled on me that the vision must remain
 beyond my memory's power to realise.
- Therefore I felt my eyes such power regain 82
 that I could lift them, and with her alone
 felt myself higher regions to attain.
- I knew then that still upward I had gone 85
 to higher glory, by the flaming glow
 wherewith more than his wont this planet shone.
- With all my heart, and with that speech's flow 88
 which is the same to all, an offering
 I paid to that new grace which blessed me so.
- Nor did I from my heart such ardour bring 91
 of sacrifice, before my prayer I knew
 to be a happy and accepted thing.
- So lustrous and so ruddy to my view 94
 the splendour glowed between its double rays,
 I cried, " Praise God to Whom this light is due ! "
- As clear, bedecked with great and lesser blaze 97
 from pole to pole, the Milky Way shines white
 and doth the wisest intellects amaze,
- So did the constellated shafts of light 100
 from out the depth of Mars make the old sign,
 two quadrants, that within a round unite.
- Here doth my memory my wit outshine ; 103
 that Cross so gleamed with Christ, I must forgo
 example worthy of it to design.
- Who takes his cross and follows Christ, will know 106
 why I must leave untold the glory shed,
 when he shall see Christ shining in that glow.
- From horn to horn, from height to base there spread 109
 lights that moved ever, sparkling as they went,
 brighter as each with each encounterèd.
- So here we see, alternate, straight and bent, 112
 swift, slow, and long and short, and ever changed
 atoms, of bodily forms constituent,

PARADISO

That move across a ray of light when ranged	115
across a shadow, that in their defence,	
with skill and art the people have arranged.	
As harp and viol music make from whence	118
comes a sweet throbbing of their mingled tone	
to one who, of the notes, has no clear sense,	
So, from those lights that ever gathering shone	121
upon the cross, a melody arose	
that charmed me, though the hymn was all unknown.	
Words of high praise the strain seemed to compose,	124
although ' Rise up and conquer,' came as sound	
comes to a hearer who no meaning knows.	
Enamoured was I then for I had found,	127
up to that time, naught else that over me	
such fetters of sweet happiness had bound.	
Perchance my words in this are all too free,	130
as though I put aside those lovely eyes,	
to gaze in which was my felicity.	
Who can the seals of beauty, as they rise,	133
see glowing brightlier, which not as yet	
had I there looked upon, will recognise	
That there was pardon for this charge I set	136
against me, even for pardon, and will see	
this truth, for here such sacred joy is met	
As ever grows in power and purity.	139

PARADISO CANTO XV

The Will benign, in which there is distilled 1
 love whose perfume is ever right and true,
 as with base longings evil wills are filled,
 Bade that sweet lyre be still and silence threw 4
 upon the sacred strings which by its hand
 are loosed or tightened to the concord due.
 And how could they be deaf to my demand, 7
 who thus, as though to urge me to the quest,
 in silence by me had agreed to stand ?
 Ah, let him then bemoan him without rest, 10
 who, for the love of what will not endure,
 strips off such love for ever from his breast !
 As through the sky serene, tranquil and pure 13
 fire burns, or here, or there, and movement brings
 to eyes that steady have been and secure,
 And as a star changing its post, that flings 16
 its rays around, save that no star was lost
 from thence and short endured its glitterings,
 So, from the arm that from the right was crossed 19
 even to the Cross's foot a star made way
 out of that cluster of the shining host.
 Nor did it from the lines appointed stray 22
 but coursed along that riband, as a flame
 when alabaster dims its fiercest ray.
 So the great spirit of Anchises came. 25
 if we believe our greatest Muse, when he
 heard in Elysium his son's dear name.
 "*O my own blood ! O grace of God on thee 28*
poured forth ! Was ever unto thee the gate
thrown open twice of heaven's felicity ?"
 So spoke this light, and as I marked his state 31
 I turned my eyes unto my Lady, dazed
 such things on either hand to contemplate.
 For in her eyes a smile so softly blazed 34
 that even therein I seemed to find the end
 of grace and Paradise, and stood amazed.

PARADISO

Then with a gaiety that seemed to lend 37
its charm to speech and voice, the spirit began,
but in a sense too deep to comprehend.
Not by his choice alone his words so ran 40
but of necessity in that he made
his standard far above the reach of man.
Then when some moderation he displayed 43
with this his bow of ardent love, and thus
his speech the target of our minds essayed,
His words first caught were : " Blessed unto us 46
art Thou, O Three and One whose favours fall
upon my seed in act so courteous."
Then followed, " Hunger long and sweet withal, 49
that seized me reading in that mighty tome
whose lines and colours alter not at all,
You have assuaged, my son, by having come 52
to this light where I meet you, thanks to her
who gives you wings these lofty realms to roam.
You think that these your thoughts to me are clear 55
even from the Primal Thought, as, from the one,
a fifth and sixth condition may appear.
And therefore who I am, and why, alone 58
I seem so struck with gladness seeing you,
you have no need for asking questions shown.
You think aright, for here, indeed, 'tis true 61
both less and greater gaze upon that glass
where, ere you speak, your thoughts are spread to view.
But, as the holy love, which doth not pass 64
aught as unseen, and which my love inspires
with longing, may more to itself amass,
Joyful, and free, and bold, speak your desires, 67
your longing wish, for surely is decreed
the answer which your questioning requires."
I turned to Beatrice, and she agreed 70
before I spoke, with what I wished : a sign
she made, to give my wish's wings more speed.
Then I began, " Both wit and love combine 73
soon as the prime equality is shown
in each of you in parity benign.

PARADISO

- For that the Sun, which upon you has shone 76
 and warmed with light and heat, so mighty is,
 comparison with it is all unknown.
- But mortal arguments and will-power miss 79
 this high equality, and, as you may see,
 have diverse wings for such a flight as this.
- I have this mortals' inability, 82
 and therefore only with the heart I may
 acknowledge your paternal grace to me.
- But, I beseech you, gem of topaz ray 85
 set in this precious jewel, with your name
 do you the ardour of my thirst allay."
- "O leaf of mine, in whom, before you came, 88
 I made my joy, expecting you, in me
 lay the first root to which you owe your frame."
- Thus he spoke, "He, from whom your family 91
 is named, and who, a hundred years and more
 has trod around the Mount's first gallery,
- Was son to me, to you relation bore 94
 as great-grandfather: with your acts 'twere well
 that you should shorten toil so long and sore.
- Florence, within her walls from whence the bell 97
 still rings for tierce and nones, in peace reposed
 soberly clad and chaste, as records tell.
- Then neither coronets nor chains composed 100
 her costume, nor were girdles then displayed
 more glanced at than the forms which they enclosed.
- A daughter's birth her father ne'er dismayed, 103
 for in that time the wedding-day and dower
 on either side were in fair measure made.
- Empty of family was no house nor tower: 106
 Sardanapalus had not come to show
 what might be done within in secret bower.
- Nor yet was Montemalo placed below 109
 your Uccellatoio, mighty in its rise,
 and yet a fall as mighty doomed to know.
- Bellincion Berti have I seen in guise 112
 of bone and leather, and his wife to go
 unpainted from her mirror ministries.

PARADISO

He of the Nerlo, he of the Vecchio 115
 both have I seen with leather coats content,—
 their wives were not at flax and spindle slow.
 O happy they who know what place is meant 118
 to be their burial and who do not weep
 for husbands all whose time in France is spent !
 One would beside the rocking-cradle keep 121
 uttering that speech which father and mother hold
 as the first pledge of love, both glad and deep.
 The other would the distaff's locks unfold 124
 the while she told the stories of their line,
 the Trojans, Rome, and Fiesolè of old.
 Cianghella then had been a wondrous sign 127
 and Lapo Salterello, as if now
 did Cincinnatus or Cornelia shine.
 To such repose that might to all allow 130
 a peaceful citizenship, a town so fair
 in order as those ancient walls could show,
 Mary, with many wailings summoned there, 133
 gave me, and then from the old Baptistery
 Christian and Cacciaguida did I fare.
 Moronto and Eliseo to me 136
 were brothers, and my wife from the Po's vale
 came, and your name with her commenced to be.
 I followed Emperor Conrad who the mail 139
 of knighthood girt upon me, so I found
 my valiant deeds to win his grace avail.
 Behind him went I 'gainst that law which bound 142
 in infamy, through evil pastor's shame,
 what should by you by every right be owned.
 There, by that people of an evil fame 145
 from the deceitful world I found release,
 which does its stains impart to many a name,
 And came from martyrdom into this peace." 148

PARADISO CANTO XVI

O small nobility of blood with us 1
 if people glory in thee here below
 where our affections are but languorous,
 No longer will I marvel : for I know 4
 where appetite strikes not,—in heaven, I mean,—
 even there I did such exultation show.
 Well do I know you like a cloak have been, 7
 to which if nought be added day by day
 shorter it grows beneath time's scissors keen.
 The 'Ye' which Romans first began to say, 10
 and which their race make little use of now,
 I uttered speaking in the ancient way.
 And Beatrice on that began to show 13
 a smiling face, apart, and to my view
 like her who, to screen Guinevere, coughed low.
 Then I began, "You are my father, you 16
 give boldness to my speech, and lift me so
 more than my own self do I reach unto.
 So many streams of gladness through me flow, 19
 my mind is full of joy that it can face
 such happiness, and not suffer from the blow.
 Tell me then, dear beginner of my race, 22
 who were your ancestors, and how, upon
 your boyhood passing seasons left their trace ?
 Tell me about the sheépfold of Saint John, 25
 what was its greatness then, and who they were
 who worthiest in its highest places shone ?"
 Then as a burning coal, on which the air 28
 blows gently, quickens into flame and glows
 so did that light as thus I spoke him fair.
 And as to me more bright its beauty rose, 31
 and with a voice more soft and sweeter grown,
 but not in speech such as between us flows,
 "From that dawn which by 'Ave' was made known,"
 he said, "until the day my mother,—now 35
 a saint in heaven,—laid me, her burden, down,

PARADISO

Five hundred, fifty, and thirty times, below 37
 the Lion's feet the flame had entered, there
 with fresh renewal of its light, to glow.
 My ancestors were born, and I, too, where 40
 the runner in your annual games will come
 to the last sesto of his swift career.
 Enough about my ancestors, their home, 43
 and whence they came, it needs not to declare :
 on all that it were seemlier to be dumb.
 At that time all men able arms to bear 46
 betwixt Mars' statue and the Baptistery,
 were but a fifth of those who now are there.
 And yet their citizenship, which now we see 49
 mixed from Certaldo, Campi, Figghinè ;
 was then pure through the humblest ancestry.
 O how much better that such folk should stay 52
 as neighbours, when Galluzzo hemmed you round
 or when your bounds at Trespiano lay,
 Than to have them within, and to be found 55
 with some foul reeking hind from Aguglion,
 or one from Signa on low jobbery bound.
 If but that race, which lowest down has gone 58
 on earth, had been to Caesar not a cold
 stepmother but as mother to her son,
 One who is Florentine and changes gold 61
 and wares, to Simifonti had been sent
 where begged his grandfather in days of old.
 Conti were still in Montemurlo pent 64
 and Cerchi in Aconè, and still might
 the Buondelmonti have been eminent
 In Val di Grievè. Ever is the plight 67
 of cities worse where tribes are mingled so,
 as crowded food will bodily ills excite.
 More quickly falls a blind bull at a blow 70
 than does a lamb, and often do we find
 one sword makes deeper cuts than five can show.
 Look but at Urbisaglia, declined, 73
 and Luni, too, how Chiusi follows fast
 with Sinigaglia not far behind.

PARADISO

To hear how families have fallen and passed is no such novelty, when we may see how even towns and cities cannot last.	76
All your affairs have their mortality as ye have, but where life does longer cling 'tis the less noted, for short-lived are ye.	79
And as the rolling of the lunar ring covers and bares the shore unceasingly, to Florence a like fate does fortune bring.	82
For which cause, then, no wonder let it be I tell of many a high-bred Florentine whose fame time hides in its obscurity.	85
Ughi and Catellini, and the line of Filippi, Ormanni, Greci, all the Alberichi have I seen decline.	88
Great as of old, them have I seen they call of the Sannella, and the Arca, too, Soldanieri, Ardinghi, withal,	91
And Bostichi. Above the gate, anew laden with crime so heavy that its weight may well destroy the vessel and its crew,	94
Dwelt then the Ravignani, whose estate Count Guido represents, and he who bears the lofty Bellincione's name of late.	97
The Della Pressa dealt then with affairs of government, and Galigaio wore the hilt and pommel gilt which now he wears.	100
Great was the column 'vair' Sacchetti bore, Fifanti, Giuochi, and Barucci, too, Galli, and who for false weights blushed all o'er	103
With shame. Calfucci's stock to greatness grew already, and to curule office raised were Sizi and Arrigucci whom we knew.	106
How great have I seen all those now debased by their own pride ! The ever golden balls in each great enterprise of Florence blazed.	109
Thus did their fathers, who, whene'er there falls a vacant church, grow fat by battenning together in their consistorial halls.	112

PARADISO

That tribe unspeakable, who the dragon's wing 115
 spread after him who flies, but whom teeth bared
 or purse unstrung, to lamb-like quiet bring,
 Already rose from humble birth : ill fared 118
 Ubertino Donato when his race
 his father-in-law to mingle with them dared.
 Then Caponsacco to the market-place 121
 had come from Fiesolè : as townsmen good
 Giuda and Infangato we may trace.
 Incredible but true it is, there stood 124
 a little gate about the lesser round
 which was named after those of Pera blood.
 Each one, on whom the noble arms are found 127
 of that great Count whose name and worth are still
 at each Saint Thomas' Festival renowned,
 From him got knighthood and its rights, the frill 130
 around them though one bears, who now applies
 his energies to serve the people's will.
 Already Gualterotti were, likewise 133
 the Importuni, Borgo in repose
 might still be, did new neighbours not arise.
 The house, from which your wailing first arose, 136
 because of that just wrath that wrought your death
 and your life's gaiety brought to a close
 With its consorts, the City honoureth : 139
 o Buondelmonte evil was your flight
 from its fair nuptials at another's breath !
 Glad had been those now in such doleful plight, 142
 had God to Ema given you when your eye
 did first upon the City's walls alight.
 But it was meet a sacrifice should lie 145
 beside that broken stone that guards her stream,
 peace gone from Florence thus to signify.
 With all these folk and others did it seem 148
 that Florence lay at rest, nor was there cause
 for wailing to intrude upon her dream.
 With them, her people glorious, and her laws 151
 framed all in justice, no one rudely tried
 to turn her lily on its staff, nor was
 It ever red with blood of faction dyed." 154

PARADISO CANTO XVII

As came to Clymenè that one, who still 1
 makes fathers grudging to their sons, to hear
 what had been said against himself of ill,
 So was I, and so then did I appear 4
 to Beatrice and to that sacred Lamp
 which to me had already drawn more near.
 At which my Lady said, "Let nothing damp 7
 the flame of your desire, but let it speed
 outward, struck rightly with your personal stamp.
 Not that our knowledge may increase, indeed, 10
 by your discoursing, but that you may know
 to tell your thirst, and men may serve your need."
 "Dear sod of my first growth, uplifted so 13
 that as we see in one triangle's space
 two obtuse angles cannot ever go,
 So you perceive contingencies have place 16
 ere they exist, while on that point you look
 which does the reach of every time embrace :
 Whilst I my way along with Virgil took 19
 by that high Mount which doth men's souls amend,
 and for a world of dead the light forsook,
 Words of great moment on the future trend 22
 of my own life I heard, but yet I feel
 square-set against whatever fortune send.
 Hence am I fain that something should reveal 25
 what the disaster is that threatens me :—
 with arrows seen we may more safely deal."
 So spoke I to that light which formerly 28
 had spoken to me, and my wish confessed
 as Beatrice had willed that it should be.
 Not riddling as the foolish folk expressed 31
 of old their tangling words before was slain
 the Lamb of God, who all men's sins redressed,
 But in clear words and with a lucid strain 34
 of speech, that love paternal answered me,—
 love by his smile concealed and yet made plain :

PARADISO

"Contingency, which all confined must be within the page of your material, is not inscribed upon eternity.	37
Nor does it take necessity at all from this more than a tall ship outward bound . wins from the image that her sails let fall.	40
Thence, even as comes to me the deep-mouthed sound of organ music in sweet harmony, comes what by you in future will be found.	43
Even as Hippolytus was forced to flee from Athens by his step-mother's deceit, so, banished out of Florence must you be.	46
Thus it is willed, soon will the plot complete be wrought by him who ponders over it where Christ is sold each day upon the street.	49
And rumour on the injured side will fit the blame as wont is, but the truth will show when vengeance born of her has on it lit.	52
Then everything most dear you shall forego : this is the arrow sharp that will be sped first upon you from Exile's cruel bow.	55
And you shall prove how salt another's bread can taste, and, yea, how hard it shall be found upwards, or down, another's stair to tread.	58
The burden that your shoulders most will wound will be the base and silly company that in this mournful fall will ring you round.	61
Ungrateful all, in mad impiety, they shall attack you, yet, ere long, red shame upon their temples, not on yours, shall lie.	64
Their course shall their barbarity proclaim still further, for you to have formed alone a party will have proved a noble aim.	67
And your first refuge when you forth have gone shall be that noble Lombard's courtesy, whose stair the blazoned eagle sits upon,	70
Who upon you with such benignity shall look, that deed and asking, which are slow in others, quick between you two shall be.	73

PARADISO

- With him you shall see one, from birth formed so 76
 by this bold star, that ever to the height
 of notability his fame shall go.
- Not yet have men acknowledged him aright, 79
 for only for nine times o'er his young head
 these mighty wheels have circled with their light.
- But ere the Gascon with deceit has led 82
 Henry astray, his virtue shall have shone
 in wealth despised and toils encounterèd.
- And all his generous grandeur shall be known 85
 so well, that even his enemies shall not fail
 to speak in praise of all that he has done.
- Look you to him, for his power shall avail 88
 to change the state of many : you shall see
 rich men and beggars altered in the scale.
- And in your mind there shall recorded be 91
 facts which you may not speak of." Then he told
 things which they scarce can credit who shall see.
- He added, " Such the glosses which unfold 94
 what has been said to you, these secret snares
 hidden behind few turnings you behold.
- Envious be not of how each neighbour fares, 97
 for longer shall your stream of life extend
 than punishment shall reach these frauds of theirs."
- When by his silence this blest soul made end 100
 of setting thus the woof of higher light
 with the stretched warp of my desire to blend,
- Then as I, longing in the baffling night 103
 of doubt, for counsel from some one who saw
 in sympathy and charity aright :
- " Well do I see, O father mine, time draw 106
 near me, and spurred with swiftness on, to give
 blows hardest felt by those they overawe.
- And therefore may I well arm me and strive, 109
 so that if from that dearest spot I go,
 my songs me may not of all else deprive.
- Far down where lies the world of endless woe, 112
 and on that Mountain from whose lovely height
 my Lady's eyes have called me upwards so,

PARADISO

And then in heaven, from blessed light to light, 115
 have I been taught what, if I were to show,
 might many with fierce bitterness affright :
 Yet if to truth a timid friend I grow, 118
 my life may yet be forfeit among those
 to whom these years shall be as long ago."
 The light, which I had thus found to enclose 121
 my smiling treasure, broke at once in flame
 as a gold mirror struck by sunshine glows,
 And answered, "Yea, a conscience, dimmed with shame
 wrought by itself or by another will, 125
 may be sharp touched by what your words proclaim.
 Your vision, nevertheless, do you fulfil 127
 and publish, let them scratch where'er there lie
 a scab whose itching they may try to still.
 For if your words annoyance first imply, 130
 yet, when they are digested, even to these
 they may some vital nutriment supply.
 Your cry shall strike as does a mountain breeze 133
 heaviest upon the highest peaks, and this
 shall add no little honour to your pleas.
 And to this end, in all these rounds of bliss 136
 the famous only have you spoken to,
 as on the Mount and dolorous Abyss ;
 The soul of him who hears rests not, nor do 139
 examples serve to strengthen faith in him,
 their sources being hidden from his view,
 Nor other arguments whose light is dim." 142

PARADISO CANTO XVIII

Then seemed, indeed, that blessed mirror glad 1
 at his own words, and mine I also tried,
 savouring among them what was good and bad.
 The Lady who to God had been my Guide 4
 said, "Change your thoughts, and deem that I remain
 still close to Him who casts all wrong aside."
 I turned me to that voice of loving strain, 7
 my comfort, and I saw within her eyes
 such love as to describe were all in vain,
 Not only for that I my powers despise 10
 but that, indeed, my mind can not essay
 so far, until some grace its strength supplies.
 So much upon this subject I can say 13
 that, looking upon her, my constant love
 was free and by nought else was urged to stray.
 Whilst joy eternal, that its splendour wove 16
 in radiance on her face, contented me
 with light thereon reflected from above.
 Then, with a smile of conquering brilliancy, 19
 she said, "Now turn and listen : not alone
 within my glances Paradise you see."
 Then, as, sometimes, in deep affection known 22
 but by the face from which it shows its fire,
 if the whole soul from it has ta'en its tone,
 So saw I all the radiance of desire 25
 within that blessèd face I turned to see,
 that seemed some further conference to require.
 He said, "In this fifth level of the tree, 28
 which ever draws its being from on high
 and never bare of fruit or leaf may be,
 Some happy souls there are who, ere this sky 31
 they reached, on earth had names which upon all
 the Muses shed a fresh celebrity.
 Therefore gaze on the Cross, and when I call 34
 a name, look how he moves, as cloud in air
 its sudden flash of inward fire lets fall."

PARADISO

- Then as I heard him "Joshua" declare, 37
 a light was moved along the Cross: 'twas done
 so quick, no time elapsed till he was there.
- Then at the name of "Maccabee" came one 40
 moving along and wheeling:—for delight
 served as the whip to which the top was spun.
- Orlando, Charlemagne, into my sight 43
 came quickly, and on them I cast a look
 as on a hawk new-risen on its flight.
- Then William and Rinoardo, and the Duke 46
 Godfrey, and Robert Guiscard led my eye
 along the Cross on which their way they took.
- Moving and mingling in this company 49
 this soul, who spoke, now, in the songs of heaven
 began to show his vocal artistry.
- Towards Beatrice, by sense of duty driven, 52
 I turned to right of me to take from her
 some guidance, by her speech or action given.
- And lo, her eyes so clear and joyful were 55
 that all her aspect and her seeming grew,
 than even of late they had been, lovelier.
- Then as a man finds gladness ever new 58
 in welldoing and feels from day to day
 his virtue thus become more strong and true,
- So, circling with the heavens upon my way 61
 I felt my arc still widening as I saw
 that Miracle more radiance display.
- As you may see some circumstance withdraw 64
 in shortest time from off the countenance
 of some fair Dame a blush's sudden flaw,
- A change was wrought before my eager glance 67
 turned to perceive the white and temperate beam
 of the Sixth Star which met our swift advance.
- There saw I in that torch of Jove, the gleam 70
 of love that centered there and strove to raise
 signals of written speech. As birds that seem,
- Fluttering aloft, to join in clamorous praise 73
 of pastures they have left, their bands unite
 long-drawn, or crowded, as they take their ways,

PARADISO

- So creatures formed themselves within that light 76
in shape of letters, singing as they flew,
like D, or I, or L, ranging their flight.
- First did they singing fly, then, when anew 79
a sign was formed, a silence seemed to fall
a moment, till another shape they drew.
- O Pegasean goddess, from whom all 82
genius wins lasting fame, whence every town
and country gains renown continual,
- Enlighten me with your own clear renown, 85
so that these figures I may draw as they
are seen by me : here let your might be shown.
- Then letters five times seven did they display, 88
vowels and consonants, I noted each
forming the sentence which they seemed to say :
- ' *Diligite justitiam,*' was their speech, 91
' *qui judicatis terram,*' and thus closed
with verb and noun the lesson they would teach.
- Then all within the fifth word's M disposed 94
stood still, so that the light of Jove was all
of silver, powdered with fine gold, composed.
- Then on the M's high summit did there fall 97
light upon light, that rested there in song,
as answering the great Good's moving call.
- Then as from beaten brands there comes a throng 100
of sparks, and simple folk of old-time sought
to find an augury these sparks among,
- So lights arose, more than a thousand, shot 103
high in the air, and some in lighter flight
cast by the Sun who their effulgence wrought.
- And when each one had settled in its site, 106
I saw an eagle, head and neck displayed,
formed all of this array of clustered light.
- The painter here requires no teacher's aid, 109
but from Himself that power is drawn alone,
from which the forms in every nest are made.
- The other blessed spirits whose joy seemed won 112
in twining lilies round the M, now slow
followed the figure thus above it shown.

PARADISO

Sweet Star, with what a blaze of jewelled glow 115
do you reveal our justice downward shed
from heaven, o'er which such gems their radiance
throw !
I pray that Mind thus which initialèd 118
your motion and your power to scan that place
whence comes the smoke that has your light o'erspread,
So that once more, its wrath may scourge that race 121
that buying and selling in the Temple, thus
its martyrdoms and miracles disgrace.
You whom I see, O multitudinous 124
armies of heaven, pray for those souls below
led by that bad example among us !
Once war was waged alone with sword and bow, 127
now is it by withholding, here or there,
the sacred bread the Father would bestow.
And you who write decrees but to declare 130
them cancelled, think that still live Peter and Paul
who died to guard the vineyard you lay bare.
Well may you say : " My reverence is all 133
for him who chose a solitary lot,
whose martyrdom came from a dancing hall ;
The Fisherman and Paul,—I know them not." 136

PARADISO CANTO XIX

Wide-winged that lovely image over me
spread, formed of twining spirits, every one
happy in glad fruition thus to be.

And each was like a ruby in the sun
when his rays kindle it to fire, and thus,
refracted on my eyes, its glow is thrown.

What now I have to tell is marvellous
in seeming, which no voice has ever said
nor ink inscribed, nor fancy feigned to us.

For, from the Eagle's beak were uttered 10
words, and among them were both I and Me,
the meaning being, We and Our instead.

Thus it began : " Justice and Piety
have raised me thus aloft to glorious state
above which even desire can never be.

And upon earth I left renown so great 16
that evil ones do sing aloud its praise,
although none will its substance imitate."

As one glow spreads where many embers blaze, 19
so from that image in a single sound
these many loves their voices seemed to raise.

Then quick I cried : " O flowers ever crowned 22
in deathless gladness, who, in one rich scent,
mingle your perfumes breathed so sweet around,

Quench, as you pass, the fast that, ill content, 25
has kept me hungering for so long a time
upon the earth, that no such sustenance lent.

If divine Justice any other clime
of heaven lights up with such a mirrored glow,
yours, without veil, gives back that light sublime :

This I know well, and also well you know
how fain I am to hear, and what the quest
that for long years has kept me fasting so.”

Even as a falcon to his flight address, 34
when first unhooded, shakes his head and wings
eager, and strives to look his loveliest,

PARADISO

So seemed to me that Sign where murmurings 37
 in praise of grace divine with songs were blent
 well known to him who there rejoicing sings.
 Then it began : " He, who the compass bent 40
 to round the world's extremes, and in it showed
 things hidden, or disclosed by His intent,
 Could not His Universe with His worth so load 43
 and so impress, but that an infinite
 excess of His own Word there still abode.
 This by that first proud one is shown aright, 46
 who was of all created things the crown
 yet fell unripe, not waiting for the light.
 Hence every lesser nature is thus shown 49
 too small a frame for that eternal Good,
 which is but measured by Itself alone.
 Wherefore our sight, which must be understood 52
 to be but one ray of the Mighty Mind
 that does all things with its effulgence flood,
 Cannot in its own power such virtue find, 55
 but that a greater Power than its own
 lies over, or about it, or behind.
 So, in Eternal Justice the light shown 58
 unto your world is lost as to an eye
 upon the soundless depths of ocean thrown.
 For, though about the shore it can descry 61
 the bottom, in the open sea it fails
 to reach it, lost in its profundity.
 There is no light, indeed, but what prevails 64
 in the serene where comes no storm ;—save this,
 all is but shade, or noxious fleshly veils.
 Enough have I unclosed the dark abyss 67
 which hid the living Justice from your sight,
 so constantly enquiring what it is.
 For thus you speak, ' A man first sees the light 70
 by Indus' banks, where there is none to tell
 of Christ, and none to read, and none to write,
 And all his deeds are good, his thoughts formed well 73
 in human reason's measure, and he knows
 how sinful act and wicked speech to quell :

PARADISO

Yet unbaptised and lacking faith he goes	76
to death, what Justice does condemn that man ?	
or this, as crime, upon him would impose ?	
How can you sit as judge and try to scan	79
a thousand miles away with the poor sight	
that cannot see things clear beyond a span ?	
Truly to him who argues with such sleight,	82
if but the Scriptures were not over you,	
there would be ground for questioning the right.	
O earthly animals, O gross minds, too,	85
the Primal Will, which of itself is good,	
change from that high perfection never knew.	
All that is just conforms to this high mood,	88
and no created good attracts the light	
whose shining makes that Justice understood."	
As, at her nest, the stork in sweeping flight	91
wheels o'er her hungry young, and one, new fed,	
looks up to her in satisfied delight,	
So did that blessed shape, its wings outspread,	94
and so did I uplift my brow below	
its circling, by so many counsels sped.	
Flying around, it sang, "As my notes flow	97
to your unwitting ears, the minds of men	
but little of Eternal Justice know."	
When into quietness had fallen again	100
those beacons of the Holy Spirit, the Sign	
that made Rome feared of each world-citizen,	
Again began, "None to this realm divine	103
comes who to Christ, before or since they nailed	
Him to the Tree, did not his faith incline :	
But lo, how many voices that Him hailed,	106
crying 'Christ, Christ,' shall further stand at last	
than those to whom He never was unveiled ?	
The Ethiop his blame on them shall cast	109
when the two companies, one into gain,	
and one to loss eternal, shall have passed.	
What shall the Persians say when they see plain	112
within that Book the story of your Kings	
and the recorded censure of each reign ?	

PARADISO

- There shall be seen the deeds and counsellings 115
of Albert, that shall move the pen to write
of what the realm of Prague to ruin brings.
- Then shall be seen the woe that yet shall light 118
on Seine through his false coinage, whom to death
erelong the wild boar's tusk shall rudely smite.
- Then shall be seen the pride that maddeneth 121
the Scot and Englishman, that in his bound
neither of them in patience sojourneth.
- The loose luxurious life that shall be found 124
in him of Spain, and of Bohemia's lord,
never for good nor wish for good renowned.
- Jerusalem's cripple can but scarce afford 127
one I for all his virtues, while, alas,
his numerous crimes must with an M be scored.
- The avarice of him who warder was 130
of yonder Isle of Fire, shall yet be seen,
where old Anchises had from life to pass.
- To show how paltry his record has been 133
small letters shall be used to write it down,
so crowded is the history and so mean.
- And unto all men shall it well be known 136
how that his uncle and his brother brought
each to disgrace his noble race and crown.
- The Kings of Portugal and Norway's lot 139
shall, too, be known, and Rascia's Prince, as well,
who in ill hour the coin of Venice sought.
- O happy Hungary, if no more they tell 142
of her thus mangled !—happy, too, Navarre
if she from out her hills all foes repel !
- Believe that signs of this event there are, 145
in that Nicosia and Famagosta weep
that cruel beast that, not divided far
- From his companions, does his station keep." 148

PARADISO CANTO XX

When he, who doth the world illuminate, 1
 from out our hemisphere descending slow,
 makes brightness in all quarters to abate,
 The sky which in the day was all one glow 4
 breaks into scattered lights which separate shine
 and all their twinkling to one splendour owe.
 This change I thought of when that great Ensign 7
 of all the world and all its leading lords
 to silence brought its mighty beak divine ;
 For all those living lights with songs and words 10
 more brightly shining then began to sing,
 of which my memory no trace affords.
 O sweet Love, wrapt in smiles encompassing, 13
 how did you breathe in these flute stops that bore
 nought but the sighs from holy thoughts that spring !
 Then when the clear and precious stones, that o'er 16
 the sixth heaven spread like gems, had closed and
 brought
 to silence all those angels' chimes once more,
 I seemed to hear, as 'twere, the murmur wrought 19
 by a great stream which down from stone to stone
 roars from the fulness of a mountain grot.
 And as within the lute's neck a low tone 22
 gathers, or at a flute's interstices,
 through whose finespace the quickening wind is blown,
 So, without further stay, the sound's increase 25
 rose to the Eagle's beak and issued thence
 as through a hollow throat in words like these :
 The message with a clear intelligence 28
 reached to my heart that waited, so I wrote
 upon it as I understood their sense.
 " This part which sees, on which the sun has smote, 31
 in mortal eagles, must the centre be
 to which do you your steady gaze devote."
 So spake it to me, " For that spark you see 34
 about the eye than every other light
 is greater in its luminosity.

PARADISO

- He who within its pupil shines most bright 37
 is he, the Holy Spirit's psalmist best,
 who bore the Ark about with solemn rite.
- Now knows he—and such guerdon has confessed,—
 the merit of his singing, for that it 41
 from his own meditation was expressed.
- And of those five who on the eyebrow sit, 43
 the nearest to the Eagle's beak is he
 who to the widow spoke condolence fit.
- Now knows he well how dear it costs to be 46
 not of Christ's following, by what came to him
 in this sweet life, and that led formerly.
- And he, who follows on the upper rim 49
 I spoke of, at death's hour by penitence
 sincere, obtained a few years' interim.
- He knows the justice of Omnipotence 52
 changes not, though, on earth, a worthy prayer
 with to-day's work may till the dawn dispense.
- The next who with the laws and me comes there, 55
 with good intention, that bore evil fruit,
 made him a Greek, yielding the Shepherd's share.
- The evils he was led to institute 58
 by this good deed, he knows now, hurt him not,
 though the world's ruin men to it impute.
- Then he whom you observe about the spot 61
 where the arch slopes, was William, wept by those
 who under Charles and Frederick, mourn their lot.
- Now, truly, all the love of heaven he knows 64
 towards a righteous King, and by increase
 of light within he this appreciance shows.
- Who, living 'mid the low world's fallacies, 67
 would dream that Trojan Ripheus, in this round
 is placed as the fifth holy light 'mid these ?
- Now knows he what of grace there may be found 70
 which those on earth perceive not, though it be
 his power of sight reach not its utmost bound."
- Even as the lark in heaven soaring free 73
 first sings, then to ecstatic silence falls,
 sated with sweetness of her minstrelsy ;

PARADISO

- So seemed to me that image which recalls 76
the imprint of eternal pleasure, whence
all things in love take their originals.
- Then though I was as glass with imminence 79
of questionings coloured over, these would not
remain in patient silence or suspense :
- But from my mouth by its own weight was shot, 82
“What things are these?” which now upon each light
a glow of happy coruscation brought.
- Then suddenly, and with its eye more bright, 85
the blessed Ensign answered me, lest I
should tarry longer in my wondering plight,
- “ I see that you believe as verity 88
what things I tell you though you see not how,
so that believèd they still hidden lie.
- You are as he who a thing’s name may know 91
and yet be ignorant of what it is,
unless its quiddity another show.
- The heavenly kingdom* subject is to this 94
that therein even the Will Divine may meet
with force from lively hope and love’s warm bliss,
- Not overcome, as man may man defeat, 97
but willing to be conquered, by its own
beneficence led to victory complete.
- The first life, this great eyebrow placed upon, 100
and fifth may set you wondering, for you see
their lights amid the Angels’ country shown.
- Whate’er you think, they were from flesh set free 103
Christians, not heathen : faith within them yearned
towards Feet whose pain was past, or yet to be.
- The first of them into his bones returned 106
from Hell where none to righteousness attain ;
by living hope this recompense was earned,
- That living hope gave such a powerful strain 109
in prayers to God that he upraised should be,
some moving power on his own will to obtain.
- That glorious soul, so spoken of by me, 112
brought back to flesh in which short space he stayed,
believed in Him, his Helper, faithfully.

PARADISO

- And this belief in Him such splendour made 115
of truest love, that at his second death
fit was he to this joy to be conveyed.
- That other, by the grace which issueth 118
from Fount so deep that never eye hath peered
to its first wave that lies so far beneath,
- With all his love so righteousness revered 121
that God with grace on grace became his guide,
till our redemption to his sight appeared.
- Whence he believed in it nor could abide 124
in paganism's miry ways to stay,
but ever would those perverse people chide.
- Those three Dames, whom you saw to take their way
by the right wheel, stood at his christening 128
a thousand years before his baptism day.
- Predestination ! Ah, how high a thing 130
and hidden is thy root from the weak sight
that sees not whole the first Cause at its spring !
- For you, O mortals, let the rein be tight 133
that holds you back from judgment : we, who see
the Almighty, know not the elect aright.
- To us it is a sweet deficiency, 136
and our good in this goodness is refined,
for we all will what God has willed to be."
- Thus by that sacred Image to my mind 139
was clearness brought, and to my shortened sight
was ministered a medicine sweet and kind.
- As, to a songster good, tuning aright 142
his trembling string the Harper can evoke
from out the song new measure of delight,
- So I remember seeing whilst he spoke, 145
even as the movement of the eyes accords,
that those two lights into new glory broke
- With brighter splendour thrilling at the words. 148

PARADISO CANTO XXI

My eyes already on my Lady's face 1
 were fixed, and all my mind in the same way,
 so that no other purpose there had place.
 She smiled not. "Should I smile," I heard her say, 4
 "you would indeed become as Semelè
 that time when she to ashes fell away.
 For this, my beauty, which at each degree 7
 of this eternal palace kindles more,
 as you have seen ascending thus with me,
 Were it not tempered, shines so that your store 10
 of mortal powers were at its flash undone,
 as foliage shattered in the thunder's roar.
 See, to the Seventh Glory have we won, 13
 which underneath the lion's fiery breast
 rays down, making with it their power as one.
 Let your mind follow where your eyes now rest, 16
 let them as mirrors to the Image be
 that in this mirror is to you expressed."
 He, who should know what feast it was to me 19
 to look upon that blessed face, will know,
 when changing thus to new activity,
 How much my joy increased to follow so 22
 my heavenly escort's orders: well I weighed
 the advantage that from either course would flow.
 Within the crystal sphere where is displayed 25
 the name of its great leader, at whose feet
 all evil, stricken unto death, was laid,
 Coloured like gold that does the sunshine meet, 28
 I saw a ladder towering up on high
 so far my eyes saw not its length complete.
 And there I saw, descending gloriously 31
 the steps, so many splendours that I thought
 there gathered were the lights of all the sky.
 And even as jackdaws by their nature taught, 34
 at daybreak stir together and take wing
 to warm their feathers with the night's chill fraught,

PARADISO

And some go off on distant journeying, 37
 others return to where they first took flight,
 and others circle round in airy ring ;
 So, as it seemed to me, in that great light 40
 of wingèd glories was it, as they lit
 upon one step of that great ladder's height.
 Then one of them, who close by seemed to flit, 43
 became so radiant that I said in thought,
 " your love I see, and how you signal it."
 But she, by whose direction I am taught 46
 the when and how of speech and silence, stays,
 so that, unwilling, I address him not.
 Then she who saw my silence in the gaze 49
 of Him who seeth all things, said to me,
 " the floodgates of your warm desire upraise."
 I said, " In me no merit can there be 52
 that you should answer me, but for her sake
 who thus allows my curiosity,
 O blessed life who seem your home to make 55
 hidden in very gladness, let me know
 why thus so near to me your way you take,
 And wherefore in this circle is there no 58
 sweet symphony of Paradise whose sound,
 devoutly uttered, filled all those below ?"
 " Your ears and sight in mortal powers are bound," 61
 he said, " for the same cause no song is here
 that here, unsmiling, Beatrice is found.
 Adown this sacred ladder, to be near 64
 to you I come, so far that I may speak
 and gladden you, clothed in this radiance clear :
 No greater love made me your presence seek 67
 than glows up yonder, yea, as much as mine
 you may discern in each refulgent streak :
 But that great love, that makes me here incline 70
 to service of the Mind that governs all,
 as you may see, does thus our task assign."
 " Well do I see," I said, " love liberal 73
 may make, O sacred lamp, within this Court
 all wills to follow God's eternal call.

P A R A D I S O

But why of all those who with you consort 76
you were predestined for this work, to me
appears a question of a harder sort.”

I had not reached the last word before he, 79
the light upon its middle centering,
whirled with a swift mill-stone’s rapidity.

Then answered me the love that had its spring 82
within the centre, “ Light divine its beam
even through this covering of mine doth fling,

Whose virtue and my power of vision seem 85
to lift me o’er myself, so that I know
it issues from the Essence All Supreme.

Thence comes the joyfulness with which I glow, 88
for, to the clearness of this sight of mine,
an equal glory does about me flow.

But even that light, which does most brightly shine, 91
that Seraph, who most looks on God on high,
to answer your enquiry will decline.

Because within the abysmal mystery 94
of the Eternal Statute lies the thing
you ask of, and is hid from mortal eye.

Then, to the world returning, do you bring 97
this message, let it not presume to move
its foot towards such a goal journeying.

The mind, which here shines in the light of love, 100
on earth is dimmed with smoke, how should it be
able to find what even is hid above ? ”

So did I feel his words restraining me : 103
I held me back, save that his name to know
I asked of him in all humility.

“ Between the shores of Italy stand a row 106
of rocks near to your fatherland, so high,
the thunder-clouds pass, muttering far below.

Where these rocks gathered in a mountain lie 109
named Catria, a consecrated cell
was built, once given to prayer exclusively.”

So he began his third address. “ So well 112
and firmly settled in God’s service there,”
said he, continuing of his life to tell,

PARADISO

- " That nought but juice of olives was my fare 115
 with which I passed through heat and wintry cold,
 while contemplation was my only care.
 Once did that cloister plenteous fruits unfold 118
 to heaven, now is it void, and, I doubt not
 soon will the story of its want be told.
 My name was Peter Damian in that spot, 121
 Peter, the Sinner, in Our Lady's shrine,
 when by the Adriatic was my lot.
 But a small remnant of my life was mine 124
 when I was called and led the hat to wear
 of those who now from bad to worse decline.
 Cephas and he, the vessel chosen to bear 127
 the Holy Spirit, came, shoeless and lean,
 and at each common Inn they took their share.
 Now must the modern pastors march between 130
 those who support their weight, and one ahead
 to lead, and one to bear their train is seen.
 Over their palfreys are their mantles spread 133
 so that two beasts are covered by one skin.
 o Patience, how much have you sufferèd ! "
 At these words, lo, I saw new flames begin 136
 to come adown the stair with whirling flight,
 while at each turn they shone more fair within.
 Beside this one I saw them all alight, 139
 staying themselves, and from them all around
 came such a cry, I know not how aright
 To speak of it, so thunderous was the sound. 142

PARADISO CANTO XXII

Oppressed with stupor, then, towards my Guide 1
I turned as does a child who runs for aid
to one in whom he feels he can confide :
And she, as does a mother who, thus prayed, 4
succours her pale and panting little one
with words which oftentimes comfort have conveyed,
Spoke to me : " Know you not that you have won 7
to heaven, and that all heaven is holy ? Here
all actions from a righteous zeal are done.
How greatly changed your aspect would appear 10
by that loud voice and by my smiling face
now to your contemplation may be clear !
If you the meaning of these prayers could trace, 13
already would you well that vengeance know
which you may see even in your lifetime's space.
The sword from hence gives not its downward blow 16
hastily, nor too late, save unto those
who for its coming long or fear, below.
But turn your look on others : as it goes 19
many illustrious spirits it will meet
if you but scan them well as I propose."
Even as she counselled me I turned to greet 22
those souls and saw a hundred little spheres
each lighting each to beauty more complete.
I stood uncertain, then, as one appears 25
who seeks to blunt the point of his desire
nor cares to ask, so much excess he fears.
And that which was the greatest and whose fire 28
of pearly radiance shone the most, came near
to meet what all my will seemed to require.
And these words from within it I could hear : 31
" did you but see, as I, the love whose glow
lights us, you would have made your longing clear.
But lest, by waiting, your desire should go 34
back from its end, I will afford replies
only to thoughts you do not let us know.

PARADISO

That Mount, upon whose side Cassino lies, 37
 once was frequented at its loftiest height
 by evil folk deceived with subtleties :
 And I am he who there first bore aright 40
 His name who brought to earth the truth that leads
 the soul of man into sublimer light.
 And grace so glorious shone upon my deeds 43
 that the surrounding places I withdrew
 from that vain worship which the world misleads.
 These other fires were men who also knew, 46
 by contemplation, all that sacred glow
 from which the holy flowers and blossoms grew.
 Here is Romoaldo, here Maccario, 49
 and here my brothers who, within the cell,
 their feet and hearts kept back from this world's woe."
 Then I to him, " The love you show so well 52
 towards me in speaking thus, and what I see
 of happy seeming in your fires to dwell,
 Have opened up such confidence in me 55
 as does the Sun to an unfolding rose,
 that greets him, spread as wide as it may be.
 Wherefore I pray, if you, O father, choose 58
 to let me know, if I such grace may gain
 as, all uncovered, to behold you close ? "
 " Brother," he said, " your purpose is not vain : 61
 in the last sphere of all, your high desire,
 with ours and mine, will to its end attain.
 There every wish is perfect, ripe, entire, 64
 and all its parts within that sphere alone,
 from what they have been, to no change aspire.
 For there Space is not, and no Poles are known, 67
 and this our ladder mounts into that sphere,
 hence none of it is to your vision shown.
 There, upward mounting, Jacob saw appear 70
 the wondrous stair, and in the Patriarch's eyes
 it did its shining load of angels bear.
 But now, alas, to mount no footsteps rise 73
 from earth : my rule and precepts now remain
 to blacken parchments with futilities.

PARADISO

The walls that echoed once the holy strain of prayer, are but as dens, and every hood is but a sack filled with polluted grain.	76
Even Usury itself has never stood so contrary to God's will, as that fruit that leads the monks' hearts to so mad a mood.	79
For what the Church holds she should distribute to all who ask it in God's name aright, and not to kin, or those of base repute.	82
Man's flesh is yet so prone to soft delight, a good beginning serves not, till the tree from sapling grows to acorn-bearing height.	85
No gold or silver Peter had when he started his mission,—I with prayer and fast began,—and Francis with humility.	88
If each of these you scan from first to last, you will discover how they went aside and how the white with dusk was overcast.	91
Yet Jordan turning back, and the Sea's tide at God's word taking flight, more marvellous were than a saving help to them applied."	94
So spoke he to me, and away from us turned to his company, which then more close gathered, and rose with whirlwind impetus.	97
Then my sweet Lady urged me, after those, with but a signal, to ascend the stair: so did she rule my nature as she chose.	100
Nor ever here below, where we repair by nature up or downwards, was a flight so swift as with my winging would compare.	103
Reader, as I may once again delight in that blest triumph for which oft I mourn my past transgressions, and my bosom smite,	106
No longer than your hand would stay to burn in flame was it ere I perceived the sign next to the Bull, and was within its bourne.	109
O glorious stars !—light full of power divine, from which I recognise whate'er there be of genius in this intellect of mine,	112

PARADISO

With you rose, veiled in like obscurity, 115
 he who is father of all lives below,
 when first I breathed the air of Tuscany.
 Then, when grace first consented to bestow 118
 on me the power to enter where you roll,
 'twas chosen as the place where I should go.
 Now, in devoutest breathing, all my soul 121
 aspires that power to gain which will lead on
 through the hard passage to my destined goal.
 "You have," said Beatrice, "so nearly won 124
 to final bliss, that now your eyes should shine
 more clear and keen than they have ever done.
 Therefore, before you pass beyond this line, 127
 look down and see how great a world there lies
 beneath our feet by this ascent of mine :
 So that your heart, in happy ecstasies, 130
 may meet the approach of the triumphant throng
 that fills the ether of these spherèd skies."
 Then backward, through those Rings, my sight I flung
 one after one, till, smiling, I could see 134
 this globe that showed so small those spheres among.
 For their conclusion seems the best to me 136
 who deem it least, and he is truly right
 who lets his thoughts beyond its bounds go free.
 I saw Latona's daughter with her light 139
 undimmed with those strange shades that led my mind
 to deem that rare and dense airs there unite.
 Thy light I braved, Hyperion's son,—behind, 142
 and round him, Maia moved, and Dione
 near to his glorious orb was clear defined.
 Then saw I Jupiter, who seemed to be 145
 temperate, between his father and his son :
 the movements that they made were clear to me.
 And all the Seven in my vision shone, 148
 so that I saw their greatness, how apart
 they swiftly move, and where they turn, each one.
 That threshing-floor that makes us fierce in heart 151
 turning with the eternal Twins I viewed
 from rivers' mouths to where their waters start :
 Then, on the beauteous eyes my gaze renewed. 154

PARADISO CANTO XXIII

Even as a bird, amid the foliage dear, 1
 brooding upon her tender young all night,
 when, in the dark, loved objects scarce appear,
 To look again upon them with delight 4
 and find them food their hunger to allay,
 a daily labour which her love makes light,
 Anticipates the hour, and from a spray 7
 looks for the coming Sun with burning heart,
 and through the glowing dawn awaits the day,
 So did my Lady stand : with eager dart 10
 her eyes sought for that place where the Sun's beams
 from underneath are slowest to depart.
 So that I, looking on her eager dreams, 13
 became as one who fain would more acquire,
 and all his wish with anxious hope redeems.
 Short space there was between my keen desire 16
 to fix my mind thus, and to see the sky
 grow glorious with an ever-widening fire.
 Then Beatrice : " Behold the company 19
 that lead Christ's triumph, and the fruitage there
 gathered by all the spheres as they go by."
 Then all her face shone with such radiance rare, 22
 and in her eyes was such a joyful light,
 as never in set words can I declare.
 As Trivia in a calm and full-moon night 25
 smiles 'mid the nymphs eternal of the sky
 who deck the heavens with glories infinite,
 I saw one Sun o'er all those lamps raised high, 28
 which each of them illumined, as our own
 shines upon things that far above us lie.
 And even through the living light there shone 31
 the glowing substance so resplendently,
 my sight bore not the glory from it thrown.
 O Beatrice, sweet guide, and dear to me !— 34
 she said, " That which has overcome you thus
 is power from which none may defended be.

PARADISO

- Therein lie might and wisdom, which for us 37
 have opened up the stairs from earth to heaven,
 for which men's hopes had been continuous."
- Even as from out the bursting cloud, the levin, 40
 finding within it no sufficient space,
 against its nature to the earth is driven,
- So did my mind a larger round embrace 43
 'mid these unwonted feasts, and came to be
 something my memory can not retrace. . . .
- "Open your eyes, and let them light on me : 46
 see what I am,—such things you now have seen
 that you may bear my smile unflinchingly."
- I was as one who wrapt in dreams has been, 49
 and on awaking, struggles all in vain
 again to picture the forgotten scene,
- When I this offer heard, worthy to gain 52
 so much of gratitude as to be writ
 in memory's book for ever to remain.
- If now all tongues should sound, together knit, 55
 which Polyhymnia with her sisters made
 by their own milk with richest sweetness fit,
- One thousandth of the truth would not be said 58
 by them in singing of that sacred smile
 upon her holy countenance displayed.
- So must this sacred poem for a while 61
 here make a leap while picturing Paradise,
 as one who from a lost path may resile.
- Who ponders on the mighty theme that lies 64
 upon this human shoulder, will not hold
 its trembling aught for censure or surprise.
- For no light craft this course appears which, bold 67
 and eager, takes my billow-cleaving prow
 and can by no faint pilot be controlled.
- "Wherefore does this my face so charm you now 70
 that you turn not to yonder garden fine
 whose flowers all beneath Christ's radiance blow ?
- The Rose is there wherein the Word Divine 73
 made Itself flesh,—there are the lilies too
 whose odour led along the true path's line."

PARADISO

So Beatrice ; and I now prompt to do . 76
 her will, as at all times, no more denied
 the conflict my weak sight was led into.
 As from a broken cloud I have espied 79
 the Sun's pure ray fall on a flowery bed,
 while my eyes looked from out its shady side,
 So did I see a throng of splendours spread, 82
 illuminated from above by ardent rays,
 although I saw not whence the light was shed.
 O Power that on them such a glory lays, 85
 thyself thou hadst uplifted, so that I
 might have the strength my feeble eyes to raise !
 The name of that fair Flower on whom I cry 88
 morning and evening, all my mind then led
 to view the light that shone most gloriously.
 And when to both my eyes had entered 91
 the form and fashion of that living star
 which conquers there, as, here, it conquerèd,
 From out the heaven a torch, as coronets are 94
 in circle shaped, descended, and around
 her wheeled, and girded her with golden bar.
 Whatever melody of sweetest sound 97
 is heard below and charms the soul of man,
 were but a broken cloud in thunder drowned
 Compared with that sweet tone that then began 100
 to swell from out the lyre that crowns the height
 and bluest sapphire of the whole heaven's span.
 " I am angelic love, spreading delight 103
 that breathes from out the womb that was for us
 the Inn where our Desire deigned to alight.
 So shall I circle, Lady of Heaven, thus, 106
 until thou followest thy Son to make
 the sphere supreme even more illustrious."
 This fashion did the circling music take, 109
 and all the other lights began as one
 into the song of Mary's name to break.
 The royal mantle, in which every zone 112
 of all the world is held,—which burns the most,
 and where the ways of God are fullest known,

PARADISO

So far above us had its inner coast 115
 that looking from the place at which we stood
 even its appearance was in distance lost.
 And my weak eyesight all in vain pursued 118
 that crownèd flame in her divine ascent
 following the sacred Issue of her blood.
 Even as the infant who has been content 121
 with mother's milk, stretches his arms towards her,
 an act by which his mind shows its intent,
 So all those flames set up a burning flare 124
 which did to me the fervent love they bore
 to Mary, past all questioning declare.
 There in my sight they stood, and o'er and o'er, 127
 so sweet '*Regina Coeli*' did they sing,
 the joy of it will never leave me more.
 How great the riches in the plenishing 130
 of those full chests that here on earth were meet
 soil to receive the good seed's scattering !
 Here do they live, and have the joy complete 133
 of treasure, once in tears and exile won,
 when Babylon's gold they spurned beneath their feet.
 Here does he triumph under God's high Son 136
 and Mary, in his victory, with these
 the old and the new councils,—he the one
 Even of such glory chosen to hold the keys. 139

PARADISO CANTO XXIV

"O brotherhood to the great supper called 1
 even of the Blessed Lamb, who feeds you so
 that your desires in all things are forestalled,
 If on this man God doth such grace bestow 4
 that from your table he some crumbs may gain,
 ere death has marked the hour for him to go,
 Think on his vast desire, and do you deign 7
 him to bedew somewhat: you drink from out
 the Fount towards which his thoughts do ever strain."
 So Beatrice: three glad souls, round about, 10
 made themselves globes upon fixed poles upraised,
 like comets from which flamings fiercely spout:
 And even as wheels, in cunning clockwork cased, 13
 turn so that one seems in a quiet state
 whileas the last of all flies round, quick paced,
 So did those carols differently rotate, 16
 swiftly or slowly dancing, so that I
 the richness of each one might estimate.
 From that one which I noted specially 19
 excelling all in beauty, came a glow
 so bright it left none with it there to vie.
 Round Beatrice three times I saw it go, 22
 with such a heavenly singing, that, to me,
 my fancy serves not its delight to show.
 Wherefore my pen o'erleaps it silently, 25
 fancy and words such graces to portray
 too coarse in all their colouring seem to be.
 "O sister, dear and holy, you who pray 28
 to us devoutly, in your ardent love
 from this fair sphere you carry me away:"
 The breath that spoke, as I have said above, 31
 was turned towards my Lady by the flame,
 as soon as ever it had ceased to move.
 Then she, "Eternal light, who are the same 34
 as he to whom our Lord gave up the keys,
 brought by Him when from this high bliss He came,

PARADISO

Try this man lightly, gravely, as you please 37
upon that faith by strength of which you dared
once there below to walk upon the seas.

Whether he loves well and fair hopes has shared, 40
and holds the faith, to you is not unknown
to whom here placed, all truth is plain declared.

Since peopled is this realm by faith alone, 43
that he should speak of it to you, 'tis fit :
by which its praise and glory may be shown."

Even as a bachelor does silent sit 46
all armed, until the Master's voice is heard,
stating the question, though not answering it,

So, while she still was speaking, did I gird 49
about me every reason that might be
to such a high examiner preferred.

" Good Christian, speak, your mind now let me see. 52
say, what is faith ? " on which I raised my brow
before that light which breathed these words on me,

Then turned to Beatrice who seemed to allow 55
by sign that I should let the flood contained
within my inward fountain freely flow.

" May grace, which my confession has ordained 58
to be before the great first champion made,
let my thoughts on this theme be well explained."

Thus I continued, " As has been displayed 61
by your dear brother's truthful pen, while he
set Rome on the right pathway, with your aid,

Faith is the substance of the things that we 64
hope for, the evidence of things unseen :
this seems its essence true indeed to be."

At this I heard : " Right has your judgment been 67
if well you note, as he describes it so—
'Substance' and 'Evidence'—what his words mean."

Then I, " The things profound, which here I know 70
by grace of seeing them as they appear,
are hidden from their eyes who dwell below.

So that belief alone that they are here 73
is their hope's basis, and its genesis :
that it partakes of substance thus is clear.

PARADISO

- And so, from this belief, but right it is 76
 that we should syllogise with nought in sight,
 finding sufficient evidence in this.”
- Then heard I, “ If all knowledge were as right 79
 as this, by teaching there below conveyed,
 the sophist’s wit were but in sorry plight.”
- These words by that enkindled love were said, 82
 and these were added, “ Well, indeed, have we
 the weight and alloy of this coin assayed.
- But tell me : is it in your purse ? ” said he. 85
 “ yea,” said I, “ it is there so bright and round,
 no doubt in all its legend can you see.”
- Then issued from within that light profound, 88
 “ tell me, whence came that jewel dear to you
 which of all virtue is the building ground ? ”
- I answered him, “ The showers which bedew,— 91
 from out the Holy Spirit largely poured
 and amply spread—the parchments Old and New,
- The syllogism make whose final word 94
 seems a more keen conclusion to enfold
 than other demonstrations can afford.”
- I heard, “ How do these propositions old 97
 and new, so satisfy your intellect
 that their contents as God’s own word you hold ? ”
- “ The proof that does this argument perfect 100
 lies in the works which followed, for for those
 did Nature ne’er heat iron, nor forge erect.”
- “ But what authority,” ’twas answered, “ shows 103
 that such things were ? For that alone which tells
 the fact, must thus the truth of it disclose.”
- “ If Christianity the world compels, 106
 even without miracles, its truth to own,
 that miracle all else by far excels : ”
- I answered, “ poor and hungry were you thrown 109
 into the field to sow that goodly plant
 which once a vine, now to a thorn has grown.”
- On this, that high and holy Court the chant, 112
 ‘ *we praise God*,’ made through all the spheres to ring
 in tones to that high heaven consonant.

PARADISO

That Champion who by his examining 115
 had led me on from branch to branch, when we
 had reached the last leaves round us clustering,
 Began again, "The grace which lovingly 118
 has led your mind till now, has openèd
 your mouth as it in truth should opened be.
 So I approve of all that you have said. 121
 but now, what you believe must be defined
 and whence to your belief 'twas offerèd."
 "O Father, who now see what you divined 124
 so clearly, as before the Tomb to appear
 and enter, leaving younger feet behind,"
 I thus began, "you fain from me would hear 127
 the form that to my eager faith I give,
 and that the cause of it I should make clear :
 And I respond. In one God I believe; 130
 Eternal, Sole, from whose unmovèd power
 motion, desire, and love all things receive.
 This faith is well supported, every hour, 133
 by physics and by metaphysics too,
 and by the truth that on us like a shower
 Descends through Moses, through the prophets, through
 the Psalms, the Gospels, and what you did write
 whene'er the burning Spirit kindled you.
 Three Persons I believe in, who unite 139
 in One Eternal Essence, so that *is*
 and *are* describe them, One and Tripartite.
 The Gospel doctrine has imprinted this 142
 deep and divine condition on my mind
 so often that its sense I cannot miss.
 Such the beginning is, such you will find 145
 the spark that flames into a brighter fire
 within me, like a star in heaven, enshrined."
 Even as a master who, to his desire 148
 learns something from his servant, and thereon
 gladly embraces him ere he retire,
 So, with a chanted benediction, 151
 the apostolic light who questioned me,
 three times in circling round about me shone,
 So pleasing to him seemed my words to be. 154

PARADISO CANTO XXV

If it should happen that this poem divine, 1
 to which both heaven and earth have set their hand,
 which has for years made lean this life of mine,
 Conquer the cruelty that has me banned 4
 from that fold where, a lamb, I slept content,
 a foe to the surrounding wolfish band,
 With changed voice and with fleece all different 7
 shall I return, a poet, to be crowned
 where I received baptismal sacrament.
 For there into the faith I entry found, 10
 which leads the soul to God, and for which here
 Peter with glory has my temples bound.
 Then came another light from out the sphere 13
 whence issued forth the firstfruits of that band
 appointed as Christ's Vicars to appear.
 Then did my Lady cry with joy, "At hand 16
 behold that Peer for whom from far and wide
 the people visit the Galician land."
 As when a dove by his companion's side 19
 alights, and circling round and murmuring
 each seems in each lovingly to confide,
 So did I see the happy welcoming 22
 of one high Prince unto the other paid,
 praising the fare of their high banqueting.
 When these congratulations had been made, 25
coram me each one stood all silently,
 shining so that my face was cast in shade.
 Then Beatrice began with smiling cry, 28
 "illustrious life, who by your writings show
 our Court's surpassing liberality,
 Let hope be sounded here: well do you know 31
 its power who felt it oft as Jesu willed
 more of His light upon the three to throw."
 "Lift up your head and be with confidence filled, 34
 what comes here from the world of mortal stress
 must in our rays with ripeness be instilled: "

PARADISO

Such comfort did the second light express, 37
 and to the hills I raised my drooping eyes
 that had been bowed with too great heaviness.
 "Since, of His grace, our Emperor implies 40
 that you ere death in secret hall shall meet
 here with the Lords that form his ministries,
 So of this Court knowing the truth complete, 43
 you may in others, and in your own breast
 make hope expand with love of good replete,
 Say, then, what is it ?—how your mind is drest 46
 in flowers by it, and whence it comes, too, say."
 such was to me the second light's request.
 And then that gentle leader of my way, 49
 who had my pinions plumed for this high flight,
 answered him thus, preventing my delay :
 "Lo, the Church Militant hath none more bright 52
 with hope among her sons, as we may see
 written upon the Orb that gives us light :
 Therefore it was that, out of Egypt, he 55
 came to Jerusalem to look on her
 ere he had ended all his soldiery.
 The other points, which not for knowledge were 58
 demanded but that he may take below
 report of how much pleasure they give here,
 I leave to him,—not hard for him, I know, 61
 nor cause of boasting,—let him answer you,
 and may the grace of God him favour show."
 Then as a pupil in his master's view 64
 is prompt and keen his knowledge to reveal
 so that his excellence may get its due,
 "Hope," said I, "is the certainty we feel 67
 of future glory, when to grace divine
 and merit precedent we can appeal.
 From many stars I see this glory shine, 70
 but he first in my heart diffused its bliss
 who sang his mighty Lord in loftiest line.
 For, 'Let them hope in Thee,' his hymn was this, 73
 'to whom Thy name is known,'—to whom indeed
 is it not known, if but my faith is his ?

PARADISO

- This from him have you sprinkled on my head 76
in your Epistle, so that full am I,
and this your dew on others have I shed."
- Even while I spoke, sudden and tremblingly 79
within the living bosom of that flame
a dense flash burst, like lightning from the sky.
- Then did it breathe, "That love, that still the same 82
burns in me towards that grace which followed me
even when to palm of battle won I came,
- Wills that I breathe on you that joyously 85
you may delight in it; to me 'twere sweet
to hear what things hope tells you yet will be."
- "The Scriptures, Old and New" I said, "repeat 88
the symbol, and the thing itself disclose
those souls whom God doth with His friendship greet,
- Isaiah saith, two garments shall enclose 91
when in their own land, and that land must be
nought but this land of heavenly repose.
- Of this your brother more particularly 94
sets forth the revelation, telling us
of the white garments that are yet to be."
- Then, as the speech I uttered ended thus, 97
'*sperent in te*' was heard, and to that song
each carol made response melodious :
- Then came another light from them among 100
such that if Cancer but a crystal held
as bright, 'twere daylight all the month along.
- As a glad girl, by her good-will compelled, 103
towards the bride, may rise and join the dance,
honouring her, not by vanity impelled,
- So did I see this glorious light advance 106
to join the others who were wheeling round
as fitted their warm love's exuberance.
- Then did it mingle in their music's sound 109
and in their songs: my Lady looked on those
as a bride, motionless, in silence bound.
- "This is that one who did his head repose 112
upon His breast who was our Pelican,
who from the Cross him for great office chose."

PARADISO

- Thus spoke my Lady, nor more often than 115
before her speaking, did she move her eyes
from what she seemed with such intent to scan.
- As he who gazing long, and straining, tries 118
to see eclipse come partly o'er the Sun
and blinds himself in his attempts unwise,
- So did I look upon this flaming one 121
until I heard, "Why is your gaze thus strained
to see what to this place has never won ?
- Earth is my body, in the earth contained 124
there with the others till our number here
reach that by the Eternal Will ordained.
- With two robes in this cloister blest appear 127
only those two who rose : this you may bear
back with you to your world from this high sphere."
- At this voice there was silence everywhere, 130
as the great Circle became still, and died
the three-fold music with its mingled air :
- As to save weariness or risk elide, 133
the oars, that on the waters smote but now,
pause as a whistle sounds upon the tide.
- Ah me ! how did my mind uneasy grow, 136
when I had turned me Beatrice to see
and found I could not see her, even although
- Close to her in that heaven's felicity ! 139

PARADISO CANTO XXVI

While I still doubted lest my sight had gone, 1
from out the flame that was the blinding source,
my senses caught a softly-breathèd tone
That said, " Until your sight regains its force, 4
which you in gazing have consumed away,
'twere well that we should join in some discourse.
Therefore begin, and what the points are, say, 7
on which your mind is fixed : be satisfied
your sight is only dazzled by the way :
Because that Lady, who has been your guide 10
all through these holy realms, has in her eyes
the power that Ananias' hand supplied."
I said, " Or soon or late let her devise 13
some succour for my eyes,—the gates where through
fire came, in which my heart for ever lies.
The good, which this Court pleases, is the true 16
Alpha and Omega of all that love
in light or weighty scripture brings to view."
That voice that knew how from me to remove 19
the terror of bedazzlement, my thought
again to reasoning and discussion drove.
It said, " A narrower sieve must now be sought 22
for straining : let your words make evident
who you to aim at such a butt has taught."
Then I, " By philosophic argument 25
and by authority which hence comes down,
love has its imprint to my being lent :
For good as good, to him to whom is known 28
its import, kindles love, yea, more and more,
as more of good in its content is shown.
That Essence, which has this advantage o'er 31
all others, that all good outside its bound
is but a ray thrown from the central store,
Stronger than every other must be found 34
to lead in love the mind which can discern
the truth on which this argument we ground.

PARADISO

This truth, so levelled to my mind, I learn 37
 from him who all the primal love explains
 to me, which does eternal lives concern.
 So is it, too, expanded by the strains 40
 of that true Writer, who to Moses said,
 'to thee I show all that which good contains.'
 By you, too, is it also levelled 43
 by that great Proclamation there, below,
 which, above all, has these high secrets spread."
 Then heard I, "As the human mind may show, 46
 and other powers that may with it unite,
 you must on God your sovereign love bestow.
 But tell me still if other cords, drawn tight, 49
 lead you to Him, so that you may explain
 with what array of teeth this love may bite."
 Now was the purpose of Christ's eagle plain, 52
 and I could see how far he wished to lead
 my words, and my profession thus to gain.
 So I began again, "Those bites, indeed, 55
 which can to God draw on the human heart,
 have with the purpose of my love agreed.
 The world's existence, whereof I am part, 58
 the death which He endured that I might live,
 the hopes which among all believers start
 As in me, with what consciousness may give, 61
 as I have said, have drawn me from the sea
 of erring love, towards the true shore to strive.
 The fronds of all the bowering greenery, 64
 growing the Eternal Gardener's beds among,
 I love, for good given of His charity."
 Then, as I ceased to speak, a most sweet song 67
 rang through the heaven, and I my Lady heard
 that "*Holy, Holy, Holy*" chant prolong.
 As one who, suddenly from slumber stirred, 70
 by reason of the visual spirit that flies
 to meet the light through veil on veil, half blurred,
 Sees objects all confused before his eyes, 73
 and in his sudden vision, what he sees
 knows not, until calm thought its aid supplies:

PARADISO

So then did Beatrice my eyes release	76
from every scale with hers, whose brilliance	
even for a thousand miles knows no surcease :	
Which served my power of seeing to enhance	79
more than before ; and, as though stupefied,	
I asked what fourth light 'twas I saw advance.	
My Lady said, " That soul so glorified	82
in living converse with its Maker stays,	
to whom creative power was first applied."	
Even as a branch which, as the soft breeze plays,	85
bends down its head, and rises once again	
by its own strength which serves its head to raise,	
So did I, all amazed : then with the strain	88
of my desire for speaking made secure,	
even as I burned, for conversation fain,	
I thus began, " O fruit alone mature	91
created, ancient Father, unto whom	
all daughters trace their primal geniture,	
I now, devoutly as I may, presume	94
to ask you to address me, nor do I	
speak of my wish, which you may well assume."	
Sometimes a beast may 'neath a covering lie,	97
so that its movements may be clearly learned	
as the cloak follows its activity ;	
So did that first soul, in its light interned,	100
show, through the covering about it rolled,	
its joy in granting that for which I yearned.	
It breathed, " Although in words you have not told	
your wish to me, of it more sure am I	104
than you of the most certain thing you hold :	
For all things pictured on the Mirror lie	106
which gives back their reflection, although they	
cannot reflect its own sublimity.	
You fain would know what time has passed away	109
since God in that high garden me enclosed,	
where she led you this arduous stair to essay :	
And how long in delight my eyes reposed :	112
the true occasion of that anger great,	
and of the speech which I myself composed.	

PARADISO

My son, the cause of exile from that state 115
 was not indeed the eating of the tree,
 but that I was thus insubordinate.
 From where your Lady then set Virgil free, 118
 four thousand and three hundred years and two
 I passed in longing for this company :
 The Sun nine hundred times and thirty through 121
 the great lights of his pathway had revolved,
 whilst on the earth my mortal breath I drew.
 The language, which I spoke, had all dissolved 124
 before the hopeless task had been essayed
 on which the folk of Nimrod had resolved :
 For never did the attempt by reason made 127
 prove durable, if at the choice of man,
 whose guidance from the planets is conveyed.
 That man should speak is part of nature's plan, 130
 but whether thus, or thus, is left to you
 yourselves, to do in the best way you can.
 Before I passed the infernal torment through, 133
 J was the name by which the All Good was known,
 whence comes the joy that does me here indue.
 EL was He called thereafter : thus 'tis shown 136
 that mortal use is like a leaf, upon
 whose fall another on the branch is grown.
 I was upon that Mountain's highest cone 139
 above the waves, with life both pure and shamed,
 from the first hour until the sixth had gone,
 When the Sun through his changing quadrant
 flamed."

PARADISO CANTO XXVII

Then sang all Paradise, "To Father, Son
 and Holy Spirit '*Gloria*,'" so that I,
 intoxicated with the antiphon,
 Seemed hearkening to the ecstatic cry
 of all the smiling Universe, so raised
 to exultation both through ear and eye.
 O joy and mirth that cannot be appraised !
 o life made up of love and peace alone !
 o wealth assured, by no desire debased !
 Before my eyes the four bright torches shone
 erect, and that which came the earlier
 already fresh activity had shown :
 Such was his semblance as might Jupiter
 have worn, if he and Mars birds' shapes had ta'en,
 and had resolved each other's plumes to wear.
 The Providence which fails not to ordain
 each lot and office here, silence imposed
 on that blest choir and its far-spread refrain :
 And then I heard, "Be you not discomposed,
 if I should change my colour, for, even now,
 that change in all these here shall be disclosed.
 He, who usurps my place on earth below,—
 my place,—mine—mine—which only vacancy
 in presence of the Son of God can show,
 Hath made the tomb in which my ashes lie
 a Sewer for that blood and filth, wherein
 joys the Apostate fallen from on high."
 Then that deep colour, which the clouds begin
 at eve or dawn to take from the Sun's ray,
 began o'er all the heaven its way to win.
 And as an honest Dame with no dismay
 about herself, but of another's shame
 hearing, may to timidity give way,
 So o'er the face of Beatrice there came
 a change,—I doubt not when the Power Supreme
 suffered, the eclipse in heaven was the same.

PARADISO

Then did his words proceed, nor did it seem 37
 his voice changed less completely than his face
 had altered, as he dwelt upon this theme :
 " The spouse of Christ at first grew not apace 40
 on Linus' or on Cletus' blood or mine,
 as trained for such a mercenary race.
 But it was all to gain this life divine 43
 that Pius, Urban or Callixtus tried,
 and did their blood even with their tears combine.
 We meant not that those following us should divide 46
 the Christian people, and one part be driven
 to their right hand and one to the other side :
 Nor that the Keys, whose charge I had from heaven, 49
 should be the ensign on a banner raised
 against those to whom baptism had been given :
 Nor that my head should as a seal be placed 52
 upon these privileges, false and bought,
 at which so often have I blushed and blazed.
 In shepherd's clothing ravening wolves have sought 55
 each quiet pasture, seen from here above :
 o help from God on high, why come you not ?
 From Cahors and from Gascony, they rove 58
 to drink our blood. O times begun so fair,
 to what a vile conclusion must you move !
 But Providence, which, along with Scipio's care, 61
 preserved the glory of the world for Rome,
 yet to that world's assistance will repair.
 And you, my son, whom to your mortal home 64
 the weight of your humanity will bring,
 speak yours as freely as my tale has come."
 Even as our skies their frozen snowflakes fling 67
 downwards, when on the heavenly Goat's high horn
 the Sun's ray touches in his journeying,
 So did I see a rain of fire adorn 70
 the ether with triumphant showers of light,
 as they rose upward from this brief sojourn.
 And following their appearance went my sight, 73
 following until the thickening density
 prevented it from seeing them aright.

PARADISO

On which my Lady, seeing from the sky 76
 my sight withdrawn, said, "Now look you below
 and see how much, beneath, you have passed by."
 Then, since the moment I last looked there, lo, 79
 I saw that we had passed the arc complete
 through which the whole First Climate has to go :
 I saw from Cadiz, where my eye could greet 82
 Ulysses' foolish passage, and the shore
 to which Europa came, a burden sweet.
 And further had I seen this Threshing-Floor 85
 but that the Sun, beneath me, had gone on
 divided from me by a Sign or more.
 My loving mind, which ever dwelt upon 88
 sweet converse with my Lady, longed to bring
 my eyes on her more than it e'er had done.
 And all the food of nature's furnishing 91
 or that of Art, that will our eyes delight
 or fill our minds in flesh or picturing,—
 Yea, though these all together should unite, 94
 it would be nothing to the joy divine
 I felt when to her smile I turned my sight.
 And power from that sweet granted look was mine, 97
 so that from Leda's nest I was set free,
 to where the heavens' swiftest glories shine.
 These parts so glow in uniformity 100
 most living and most high, I could not say
 where Beatrice had chosen to station me.
 But she, well knowing where my longing lay, 103
 began with such sweet smiling that I saw
 even God's own gladness on her countenance play :
 "The fashion of the Universe, whose law 106
 stilleth the centre and moves all the rest,
 doth from this place its first beginning draw.
 This heaven has no position manifest 109
 save in the Mind Divine, from whence is shed
 the power and moving love with which 'tis blest.
 By light and love it is encompassèd, 112
 as it the others binds, and none may know
 that bond save He by whom 'tis fashionèd.

PARADISO

Unto none else does it its motion owe, 115
 but by it all the others measured are,
 as ten made up of half and fifth we know.
 How Time thus has its roots within this jar 118
 and otherwhere, the spreading of its leaves
 may to your apprehension now appear.
 O Greed,—drawing men down beneath your waves 121
 so deep that none has power to upraise
 his eyes from out the flood that so depraves !
 Will may yet flourish in these later days, 124
 but a continuous rain, upon them thrown,
 will good plums into cankered lumps debase.
 For Faith and Innocence are only known 127
 in little children, and they fly away
 before the down upon their cheeks has grown.
 One, while still lisping, will observe a day 130
 of fasting, but, when he has learned to speak,
 will no restraint upon his feasting lay.
 And many a one, still babbling, will, with meek 133
 love and obedience, to his mother burn,
 who, later, even for her death will seek.
 So quickly doth his daughter's fair skin turn 136
 to blackness, in a moment, who with us
 leaves evening and bringeth in the morn.
 And you, too, lest you deem it marvellous, 139
 consider that on earth now there is none
 to govern, where all stray rebellious.
 But ere from January snow has gone, 142
 from that small hundredth that neglected lies,
 these Circles shall resound with such a tone :
 The time, so looked for by our longing eyes, 145
 shall come, when every stern shall turn to prow,
 and on straight course shall sail our argosies,
 And true fruit follow where the flowers blow." 148

PARADISO CANTO XXVIII

When, counter to the mortal miseries 1
 of this our life, the truth was shown to me
 by her who makes my mind a Paradise,
 As in a mirror's face a man may see 4
 a taper's light that is behind him lit,
 before it in his sight or mind can be,
 And turning to discover if it fit 7
 with what exists, finds it according so
 as does a song to music wed to it,
 So was it, as from memory I know, 10
 with me, when gazing in those beauteous eyes,
 where love had slung his noose o'er me to throw.
 And when I turned, that splendour in the skies 13
 smote on my eyesight the effulgent sheen
 the eye, that scans its circling, right descries,
 And then I saw a point of light so keen 16
 in flame that vision, which on it might fall,
 closed by its very brilliance must have been :
 Whatever star appears from hence most small 19
 would be a Moon beside it, as we see
 star to its neighbour star collateral.
 Perchance as close as may a halo be 22
 around the light that paints it when the air
 has become thickest in its density,
 At such a space a fiery circle there 25
 wheeled swiftly with a motion that surpassed
 the girdled Universe's swiftest sphere :
 And this was by a second sphere embraced, 28
 that by a third, it by a fourth again,
 that by a fifth, round which a sixth was cast.
 Thereafter came the seventh, which in vain 31
 the bow of Juno's messenger would try,
 even with its round completed, to contain.
 So came the eighth and ninth : more tardily 34
 did each revolve as each in distance lay
 remoter from the central unity.

PARADISO

And that one nearest to the central ray 37
 shone clearest, I believe, because among
 all these 'twas most enlightened on its way.
 My Lady, who at this beheld me strung 40
 in deep suspense, then said to me, " Upon
 that point are heaven and all creation hung.
 Observe that circling ring,—the inmost one,— 43
 know that its space is swiftest from the love
 that on it with most piercing light has shone."
 Then said I, " If the world were made to move 46
 as these concentric circles are disposed,
 my mind could grasp what I see here above.
 But all the world of sense is so composed 49
 that those spheres are increasingly divine
 as each a wider circle has enclosed.
 Whence, if to this intense desire of mine 52
 answer be made in this angelic Fane,
 where love and light alone as boundaries shine,
 Still further must I pray you to explain 55
 why the exemplar and the copy made
 agree not, else I gaze on them in vain."
 " Marvel not if your fingers lend no aid 58
 this knot to untie, for it is now more tight
 in that its loosening has not been essayed : "
 So spoke my Lady to me : " Hear aright 61
 all that I shall explain to you, and weigh
 with subtlety its meaning recondite.
 Now the corporeal circles, as their way 64
 is wide or narrow, hold or less or more
 of that great power which all their parts display :
 And greater goodness holds a greater store 67
 of welfare : greater welfare takes more space
 if all the parts 'tis equally spread o'er.
 Therefore that circle, within whose embrace 70
 is all the Universe, is likest to
 that where most love and knowledge we can trace.
 Wherefore, if this wide measure drawn by you 73
 encircles power and not alone the shows
 of things, seen circling, even as these do,

PARADISO

- You will perceive that always among those 76
 from more to greater and from small to less
 a wondrous congruence to each intellect flows."
- Then as to all the air comes an access 79
 of bright serenity, when Boreas
 blows from that cheek whence comes most gentleness,
 By which the dim and blurring mist that was 82
 is blown away, and heaven laughs to see
 the beauty that each little district has,
 So seemed I when my Lady thus to me 85
 provided such a shining bright reply,
 and Truth seemed like a star in heaven to be.
- Then when her time of speaking had gone by, 88
 even as the sparks from molten iron spring,
 so sparkled all the circles from the sky.
 And every spark followed its glowing ring 91
 in circles, in their thousands far beyond
 the duplicated chess-board's reckoning.
- "*Hosanna*" heard I, then, each choir respond, 94
 sung to that fixed point which, to where they were
 and ever should be, was their central bond.
- And she who saw me seemingly confer 97
 with doubts within me, said, "The first rings show
 Seraphs and Cherubs all collected there.
- So swiftly, drawn in bondage, do they go 100
 to measure them there where the centre glows,
 as their sublime intelligence may do.
- Those other loves, whose circle round them goes, 103
 are called the Thrones, with divine light instilled,
 who the first ternary of circles close.
- And you must know that all their gladness build 106
 upon the depth they may have power to see
 into the Truth, wherein all mind is stilled.
- Hence may you learn that all felicity 109
 is founded on the act of sight, and not
 on love, which afterwards may come to be :
- From heavenly grace and righteous Will is got 112
 this measure of true seeing, so each one
 from grade to grade enjoys his separate lot.

PARADISO

The second ternary which flowereth on 115
in this eternal spring, which Aries
has never with his nightly watch undone,
'*Hosanna*' ceaselessly from winter frees 118
in threefold songs whose joyfulness is three,
its orders mingled thus in three degrees.
For three Divinities this hierarchy 121
holds, first Dominions, after which appear
Virtues, then Powers, last of all the three.
Then Principalities with lightsome cheer 124
another fill, Archangels follow, and last
the Angels' sports fill up the outmost sphere.
Upwards the gaze of all these ranks is cast, 127
and downward is their power so conquering
that all to God are drawn, as they draw, fast.
So Dionysius, with long pondering 130
upon these orders, gave them rank and name,
as I have done, their kinds distinguishing.
But Gregory's ordering was not the same ; 133
wherefore, when here he first unclosed his eye,
laughter, even at himself, his soul o'ercame.
Nor would I have you marvel that such high 136
and secret truth by mortal should be told,
for he who here beheld the verity
Revealed it, with much else these circles hold." 139

PARADISO CANTO XXIX

When both Latona's children, while there shine 1
 o'er them the Ram together with the Scales,
 linger at once on the horizon's line,
 As long as from the time that balance fails 4
 till they move on in inequality
 and a new hemisphere each of them hails,
 So long, and ever smiling joyously, 7
 silently waited Beatrice with her gaze
 fixed on the point that had so conquered me.
 Then she began, " I use no questioning phrase, 10
 but tell you what you wish :—for I have seen
 the point where '*when*' and '*where*' unite their rays.
 'Tis not that more advantage He may glean,— 13
 that cannot happen—but that from that place
 '*I Am*' may flame from out the glorious sheen :
 In His Eternity, outside Time's space, 16
 beyond all knowledge, at His own behest
 eternal Love has sought new loves to embrace.
 Nor at the first did all in quiet rest, 19
 for not before or after was the flow
 of God's own presence o'er the waters' breast.
 But form or matter, purified all through 22
 and joined in flawless being issued, as
 fly out three arrows from a three-stringed bow :
 And as in amber, crystal or in glass 25
 a ray of light so flashes from its fall
 there is no pause until through all it pass,
 So did the influence of its Lord through all 28
 penetrate, threefold, nor disclosed was aught
 to mark the point of its original.
 Order was co-created, and inwrought 31
 in substance,—this the summit from whose height
 throughout the Universe was action brought.
 Potentiality the lowest site 34
 filled ; in the midst power on action laid
 strong hands like withes that none can disunite.

PARADISO

Of angels Jerome writes, and has displayed 37
 the ages that have passed by since they came
 to be, ere aught else in the world was made :
 But yet in many places is the same, 40
 by writers, of the Holy Spirit shown,
 which you may find if you make such your aim :
 So would it by our reason, too, be known, 43
 which would not that the movers should so wait
 without that perfectness which is their own.
 And now you understand the place and date 46
 and fashion of these Loves' creation, so
 three flames of your desire you may abate.
 Nor should one, counting numbers, further go 49
 than twenty, ere a band of angels rose,
 disturbers of your elements below.
 The others stayed, and for their joyance chose 52
 this art of constant wheeling, which delight
 they would not even for a moment lose.
 The Fall had its beginnings in the height 55
 of pride, to which he reached, whom to suppress
 you saw the weights of all the world unite.
 Those, whom you here see, had the humbleness 58
 to know that they from out that Goodness came
 which made them swift their great task to address :
 Wherefore they all can such clear vision claim 61
 with grace, and merit, too, illuminate,
 that here their wills are full, and firm their aim.
 I would not have you doubt or hesitate 64
 to feel that it is merit to have got
 that grace, if in a true receptive state.
 Now all this class of being may be sought 67
 by your own contemplation, should I still
 my speaking,—need for further aid is not.
 But since your schools upon the earth instil 70
 this doctrine, that in the Angelic mind
 is understanding, memory and will,
 I shall proceed that you the truth may find, 73
 which is obscured thus in the world below,
 where such equivocations men may blind.

PARADISO

- These substances, since they began to glow 76
 glad from the face of God, have never turned
 their vision from it which must all things know :
- Wherefore no other object have they learned 79
 to look on, and of memory have no need
 for what by halting thought is ill discerned.
- So, in the world below they dream indeed 82
 while waking, knowing not if truth they say,
 or knowing, which to greater shame may lead.
- Below, you follow not one common way 85
 in your philosophy, so are you led
 aside by silly thoughts of vain display.
- Yet here above, that is with less of dread 88
 regarded, than when Scripture is decried
 or twisted versions of its meaning spread.
- Never do they recall the blood supplied 91
 to sow it upon earth, nor how the meek
 do please, who ever have it by their side.
- All men endeavour to show off, and seek 94
 their own inventions : preachers even discourse
 of these, and nothing of the gospels speak.
- One says the moon turned back upon her course 97
 even at Christ's passion, coming in between
 and veiling all earth's sunshine at its source :
- And others that the Sun's own light had been 100
 concealed within itself, so that by Spain
 and India and the Jews the eclipse was seen.
- Lapos and Bindos you will seek in vain 103
 in Florence numerous as the idle tales
 the pulpits, on this side and that, contain :
- So that the sheep, whose understanding fails, 106
 come home filled up with empty wind alone,
 and ignorance to excuse them nought avails.
- Christ said not to his congregation, 109
 ' forth go ye, and preach nonsense to the earth,'
 but laid sure grounds for them to build upon,
- Whose sound alone from out their lips had birth : 112
 hence in their fight for faith in human breasts
 the Gospel was their lance, their shield of worth.

PARADISO

Now do they go grimacing and with jests	115
to sermon : should loud laughter rise, no more	
the preacher, with inflated hood, requests.	
But such a bird that hood keeps in its store,	118
that, if the crowd but saw it, they would know	
what kind of pardon for their trust it bore :	
So that on earth such folly seems to grow	121
that even without a witness men confide	
in any promises that may outflow.	
So Anthony feeds the porker at his side	124
and others, no less swinish, coin have paid	
to which no imprint ever was applied.	
But since enough digression we have made,	127
turn back your eyes to the right path, and so	
our time of journeying may not be delayed.	
As for the race of Angels,—none may know	130
its number, for no speech could it declare	
nor its extent imagination show.	
If to the prophet Daniel you repair,	133
you will discover that all numbers known	
in countless myriads are hidden there.	
The Primal Light, which over all has shone,	136
in forms as many, as diverse, descends	
as are the splendours that it lights upon.	
Whence, when the act of their creation ends,	139
in diverse fashion, comes the answering love	
which its still glow with warmer fervour blends.	
See, now, the height, and the profuseness prove	142
of that Eternal Worth, which o'er and o'er	
upon so many mirrors from above	
Breaks, yet remains unbroken as before."	145

PARADISO CANTO XXX

When, it may be six thousand miles away, 1
 the sixth hour flames and from this earth below
 the shadow slopes as though on couch it lay,
 The middle of the heavens begins to show 4
 such aspect that each star its brightness veils,
 in that, to us, its light it cannot throw ;
 And as the Sun's most bright handmaiden sails 7
 upward, so does the heaven close its eyes,
 and even the glory of the loveliest fails.
 So all this pageant, whose enjoyment lies 10
 in playing round the point which conquered me,
 comprised in what does all its light comprise,
 Little by little seemed obscured to be : 13
 so that not seeing, and constrained by love,
 I turned the face of Beatrice to see.
 If all that I have said of her above 16
 were in one ecstasy of praise expressed,
 it would of what I saw unworthy prove.
 For I beheld her in such beauty dressed, 19
 as far surpassed all human sense, and so
 could but to God alone be manifest.
 So conquered by this sight myself I know, 22
 as never was comic or tragic bard
 confounded by his theme's o'ermastering blow.
 For as the trembling sun strikes our regard 25
 to blindness, so that smile, so passing sweet,
 my memory serves to dazzle and retard.
 From the first hour it was my lot to meet 28
 her in this life even to this vision blest,
 my song fails not her praises to repeat :
 But now, meseems it, that my verses rest 31
 from following her, as every artist stays
 when his great work at last has reached its best.
 Such then, I leave her for some greater praise 34
 by lordlier trump than mine, which in its tone
 the coming end of its hard task betrays.

PARADISO

By look and gesture quick, by which is known 37
 the expert leader, she began, " Here ends
 the sky's main body which is light alone :
 That intellectual light with which there blends 40
 love, love of truth for ever full of joy,
 joy that all other sweetness far transcends.
 Here, then, before your vision will deploy 43
 soldiers of Paradise, the look of some
 the Judgment will not alter or destroy."
 Then, as a sudden flash of light may come 46
 on spirits of sight to dissipate and steal,
 even o'er plain objects, the eye's masterdom,
 So, round me, living light began to wheel, 49
 binding me in its veil of brilliancy,
 through which nought could its presence there reveal.
 " So always Love, that quiets all the sky, 52
 receives an intransigent, and with welcome thus
 does a fit taper for its light supply."
 Of these brief words no sooner conscious 55
 was I, than I felt suddenly upraised
 with powers than mine far more illustrious :
 And with a newer power of sight I gazed 58
 so that no brightness, howe'er pure it were,
 but would before my glances be abased.
 Then saw I light even as a river clear 61
 with tawny flame between its margins flow,
 decked with the marvellous spring-time of the year.
 And from that flame came sparks with living glow, 64
 that leapt into the flowers and made them shine
 as rubies in a golden setting show.
 Then, as if drunken with their perfume's wine, 67
 they fell again into that wondrous stream,
 spark following spark in rising and decline.
 " The high desire, whose burning fires now seem 70
 to urge you on to know the things you see,
 pleases me as the more its flamings gleam.
 But you a drinker of this flood must be 73
 before your thirst be slaked " : so did she speak
 who was the Sun of all my sight to me.

PARADISO

Then added she, " This stream, the sparks that break 76
 from out it and thereto return, the reeds
 that smile, are shadows of the truth you seek :
 Think not the crudity of these exceeds, 79
 but that your sight attains not to the height
 which vision of their proper nature needs."
 Never does infant rush with more delight, 82
 turning him to the milk, if he awake
 later than is his custom in the night,
 Than I did, mirrors of my eyes to make 85
 clearer than hitherto, bending to greet
 the stream that runs for our improvement's sake.
 And as my eyelids did its surface meet 88
 its whole appearance varied, altering
 from a long track into a round complete.
 Then, even as masquers, if away they fling 91
 those faces, different from their own, wherein
 they dwelt before but as a hidden thing :
 So did I see the flowers and sparks begin 94
 to change to greater gladness, thus did I
 in sight to both the Courts of heaven win.
 Splendour of God ! O may that power, whereby 97
 I could behold the triumph of truth's reign,
 to tell of it lend me ability !
 A Light there is above, which can make plain, 100
 even to the creature, his Creator's face
 by which he may to his own peace attain :
 That Light doth such a wide circumference trace 103
 as would in form of circle be too wide
 the girth of the Sun's glory to embrace.
 Its aspect comes from radiance multiplied, 106
 reflected from the *Primum Mobile*,
 to which is life and potency supplied.
 And as the slope of a fair hill may be 109
 mirrored in water at its base, as though
 down looking, all its grass and flowers to see :
 So far above the light's supernal glow, 112
 round and around, I saw all of our race
 who have gone there, in many and many a row.

PARADISO

- If all so glorious in that lower place, 115
 in radiance, what must be the effulgence shown
 in outmost petals which that Rose embrace ?
 My sight, when all that height and breadth were known,
 lost not itself, but clearly understood 119
 how and how greatly all the gladness shone.
 If near at hand or far away they stood, 121
 boots not, where God no measure doth impose,
 and rules of natural law do not intrude.
 Within the splendour of the Eternal Rose, 124
 that opens and with perfume doth delight
 to praise that Sun, which spring-time only knows,
 As one who fain would speak, if but she might, 127
 Beatrice drew me, saying, " Look, how great
 the Assembly is of all those robed in white.
 The greatness of our City contemplate 130
 and see how many seats are filled, even so
 that only few new-comers we await.
 In that great Seat on which your eyes you throw, 133
 for that it bears a crown upon its crest,
 before you to this wedding-feast shall go,
 The soul (Augustan on the earth) shall rest 136
 of mighty Henry, who for Italy's right
 shall strive, ere she her need has yet confessed.
 Blind greed with all its fascinating might 139
 has made you as the child who, while he dies
 of famine, puts his tender nurse to flight.
 He, who as spiritual guide shall rise, 142
 shall neither openly nor yet unseen
 find the same path for his activities.
 Short time will he be in that trust, I ween, 145
 endured by God : for out he shall be thrown
 and sent where Simon Magus long has been,
 Thrusting him of Alagna further down." 148

PARADISO CANTO XXXI

So as a white Rose was the flower displayed 1
 of heaven's divine militia, with whom
 even by His blood were Christ's espousals made.
 The other band which, as their songs resume 4
 His praise, see Him who made them love so well
 and from whom all their happiness they assume,
 Even as a swarm of bees in each flower bell 7
 entering, then singly homeward journeying
 to turn their toil to sweetness in the cell,
 Came down into that flower from which there spring 10
 so many petals, and again returned
 to where their love was ever sojourning.
 On all their faces living radiance burned, 13
 their wings were golden, and all else of white
 such as in snow itself is ne'er discerned.
 And as they on each rank came to alight, 16
 they offered peace, and their own ardour taught,
 fanning their sides in their divine delight.
 And all this flight of theirs impeded not 19
 the vision of the Flower, nor came between
 them and the splendour which their glances sought,
 For even so penetrating is the sheen, 22
 through all the Universe, of light divine,
 no power can e'er prevent its being seen.
 This realm of joy, all safe and all benign, 25
 wherein both old and young together are,
 its look, its love, all centred on one sign.
 O Triune Light, which, in a single star, 28
 shining upon them so doth satisfy,
 look down upon our world where tempests war !
 If the Barbarians, from beneath the sky 31
 where Helicè wheels o'er them day by day,
 with him on whom her mother's yearnings lie,
 On seeing Rome her mighty works display 34
 were stupefied,—whenas the Lateran there
 o'er all men's works held its transcendent sway,

PARADISO

I who from men towards things divine now fare, 37
 and to the Eternal from time's boundaries roam,
 from Florence to a people just and fair,
 What stupefaction now on me should come ! 40
 truly, with that and with enjoyment filled,
 I would hear nought and would myself be dumb.
 And as a pilgrim is with joy instilled, 43
 when he reviews the temple of his vow,
 and hopes in others' ears it to rebuild,
 So pressing through that living glory now, 46
 I drew my eyes along the ranks and cast
 them all around, on circle high and low.
 By faces full of winning love they passed, 49
 lit with another's joy and their own smile,
 and gestures that in dignity surpassed.
 Already had I seen the general style 52
 and form of Paradise, nor had I stayed
 my gaze on one spot even a little while,
 Then turned I with my wish more ardent made 55
 to learn more from my Lady of those things
 whose explication on my mind still weighed.
 So I intended, but my purposings 58
 failed, for not Beatrice I saw, but one,
 an Elder, clad in heaven's white coverings.
 Upon his eyes and cheeks great gladness shone, 61
 his gestures all were full of piety,
 such as a tender father might have shown.
 "Where is she?" then I questioned suddenly. 64
 to which he answered, "Your desire to meet,
 Beatrice moved me from my place on high.
 On the third circle there your eyes may greet 67
 her once again, sitting upon the throne
 given to her virtues as their worthy seat."
 Without reply my eyes had upward flown, 70
 I saw her there with golden glory crowned,
 upon her from the Eternal Radiance thrown.
 From highest heaven where the thunders sound, 73
 no human eye at greater space is set,
 although it be in deepest ocean drowned,

PARADISO

- Than mine was then from Beatrice, and yet, 76
 that mattered not, for her and me between
 there was no dimming medium to be met.
- “O Lady, in whom all my hope has been 79
 most ardent, and whose footprints even for me
 impressed on Hell’s dark surface may be seen,
 Of all the things which you have let me see, 82
 even from your power and goodness do I know
 and understand the grace and excellency !
- A slave, to you my liberty I owe, 85
 drawn thitherward in every kind of way,
 by which you had the power to lead me so.
- Let your munificence upon me stay, 88
 so that my soul, which you have healed, from this
 my body to your joy may break away.”
- So prayed I, and she smiled, far off in bliss, 91
 looking on me, it seemed, then raised her eyes
 up to the Fountain that Eternal is.
- The sainted Elder said, “That you the prize 94
 of your long journeying may gain,—for prayer
 and love have called me to this enterprise,—
- Round all this garden let your eyes repair : 97
 that so they shall be fitted to pass through
 the Ray divine, and its great light to bear.
- And She, the Queen of Heaven, who ever drew 100
 all my heart’s burning love, will grant us grace,
 knowing me, Bernard, as her servant true.”
- As one, perchance of far Croatia’s race, 103
 comes wondering our Veronica to see,
 unsated with the story of that Face,
- And murmurs while ’tis shown, “And can it be 106
 my Lord Christ Jesus, and true God, that this
 was Thine appearance in humanity ? ”
- So was I gazing on the living bliss 109
 of love in him who, in his quiet thought,
 while in the world made peace for ever his.
- “O son of grace, that happy soul will not 112
 be known to you,” he said, “if you still gaze
 with downward eyes upon this lower spot.

PARADISO

Look up, even to the furthest circles, raise 115
 your eyes and see where thronèd sits the Queen,
 whom all within this realm adore and praise.”

I raised my eyes : and as the dawn is seen 118
 to flood the eastern sky with lovelier light
 than lingers where the fallen Sun has been,
 So, as from some deep vale one scales a height, 121
 I with my eyes discerned a loftier space
 which, than the lower rampart, shone more bright.

And as we wait the first apparent trace 124
 of that great Chariot Phaëthon guided ill,
 the light is greatest at that central place,
 So did that peaceful oriflamme instil 127
 life in the centre, and on either hand
 a lessened radiance did the heavens fill.

And in that centre point I saw expand 130
 thousands of angels’ wings, who joyance made
 with all the glow and art each could command.

I saw there, smiling on them as they played, 133
 a Beauty which to all those saintly eyes
 a glow of heavenly joyfulness conveyed.

And if my words I could as well devise 136
 as my imagination paints, no part
 of all her charm in them could I comprise.

Bernard, when he perceived me keenly dart 139
 my eyes towards the fire with which he glowed,
 turned his on her : to mine he seemed to impart
 That love to look once more that from them flowed. 142

PARADISO CANTO XXXII

Attached thus to his Love this man of thought 1
 him to the teacher's task freely addressed,
 and with these holy words my attention sought :
 "The wound, which Mary closed and gently dressed, 4
 she there, so beautiful, beside her feet,
 is the one who opened it and sorely pressed.
 Then, in the order of the third ranked seat, 7
 Rachel sits yonder, lower down : with her
 is Beatrice whom thus your eyes may greet.
 Sarah, Rebecca, Judith see, and there 10
 the ancestress of him of sorrowing song,
 who '*Miserere mei*' made his prayer,
 You may see there, in order ranged along, 13
 descending rank by rank, as named by me,
 the petals of the glorious Rose among.
 And from the seventh downward you may see, 16
 even as above it, Hebrew dames who throw
 the Flower's bright locks apart confusedly :
 Because, according as the faith below 19
 looked upon Christ, this barrier separates
 the sacred steps in twain divided so.
 On this side, where the Flower luxuriates 22
 in full-ranked petals, those sit who believed
 in Christ to come, not then annunciate :
 And on the other, where are interleaved 25
 blank spaces, in the semicircle sweet,
 those who have seen Christ's mission all achieved.
 And as on one side stands the glorious seat 28
 where sits the Lady of heaven, and, below,
 those others, who make that part all complete :
 So, opposite, great John is thronèd so 31
 who, after desert life and martyrdom,
 two years in Hell even had to undergo.
 And, under him, in this partition, come 34
 Francis and Benedict and Augustine
 and others, down to where we see them from.

PARADISO

Now see the marvellous providence divine, 37
 which the completion of this glorious Rose
 doth to these classes equally assign.
 And know that 'neath the track, which downward goes
 dividing, thus, the two partitions, sit 41
 they who no merit of their own disclose,
 But from another's,—fixed rules govern it,— 43
 they claim their place : for all these here were sent
 ere to make faith's election they were fit.
 Even by their faces this is evident 46
 and by their childish voices, if you gaze
 upon them and are to their cries intent.
 Now are you silent, puzzled in amaze : 49
 but I will quickly the strong knot untie
 of subtle thought which all those questions raise.
 Within this realm's large circuit there may lie 52
 no casual point of chance, as there may not
 come hunger, thirst or sad perplexity :
 For by eternal laws the frame is wrought 55
 of what you here may see, so that the ring
 to fit the finger perfectly is brought.
 Wherefore this race, untimely hastening 58
 to their true life, not *sine causa* rest
 more or less excellent in their ordering.
 The King, according to whose high behest 61
 the realm in happiness and love now lies,
 so great no will aught greater dare suggest,
 Creating every mind with joyful eyes, 64
 at His own pleasure gifts divine bestows
 upon them,—let the effect then here suffice.
 And Holy Writ all this expressly shows 67
 and clearly in those twins who, still unborn,
 felt towards each other all the wrath of foes.
 So as each head does grace like this adorn 70
 with locks of varying hue, the light supreme
 gives each his crown for merit to be worn.
 Thus, while deserts come not within the scheme, 73
 they all are pleased in stations different,
 as they more keen at the beginning seem.

PARADISO

It was enough among the innocent 76
 of primal ages, that the father's store
 of faith should to his progeny be lent.
 And after, when those early times were o'er, 79
 all males by rite of circumcision, sought
 to make more strong the innocent wings they bore.
 But, when the times of grace came, we are taught 82
 only Christ's perfect baptism won the ascent
 of innocence from out its earthly lot.
 Look, now your eyes upon that face be bent 85
 which most resembles Christ's, for from its light
 to look on Christ's own may some grace be lent."
 I saw on her such joyfulness alight, 88
 raised from those blest minds who created were
 through that high altitude to take their flight,
 That nought of what before I witnessed there 91
 held me suspended in such wonderment,
 nor could so clear a vision of God confer.
 And then that love who first to her was sent, 94
 '*ave Maria gratia plena*' sang,
 and, spreading out his wings, before her bent.
 From every side a glad response there rang 97
 from all the regions of that Court divine,
 and fresh content to every countenance sprang.
 "O holy Father, who, for weal of mine 100
 and to be near me here, the blissful seat
 of your eternal sojourn thus resign,
 Who is that angel who so glad doth greet 103
 our Queen, and looks, adoring, in her eyes,
 as though he were with flames of love replete?"
 Thus did I question my instructor wise, 106
 he who from Mary all his beauty drew,
 even as the morning star shines at sunrise.
 And he to me, "Such grace and boldness, too, 109
 as e'er in Angel or in soul may be
 he has, and his delight we gladly view.
 The happy bearer of the palm was he 112
 to Mary there below, when God's own Son
 took up the burden of humanity.

PARADISO

But follow with your eyes as I lead on in speech, and in this empire just and blest behold the nobles who high place have won.	115
Those two who sit on high, the happiest, as nearest to our Empress are, indeed, the roots on which this Rose does truly rest.	118
He, for whose place the left side is decreed, the Father is from whose bold appetite the human race on bitterness now feed.	121
And see the ancient Father—there, to right,— of Holy Church, unto whom Christ the keys entrusted of this Flower exquisite.	124
And he, who all the grave anxieties saw, ere he died, of the fair spouse, then won even by the nails' and lance's agonies,	127
Sits by his side : and on the other, one that Leader was who once on manna fed a thankless race prone to rebellion.	130
Anna sits fronting Peter, comforted wholly by gazing on her daughter's face, to sing ' <i>Hosanna</i> ' turning not her head.	133
Fronting the greatest Father of the race is Lucia, who your Lady moved to aid, when your eyes drooped to ruin and disgrace.	136
Time flies as thus in wonder you have strayed : here let us pause, as a good tailor may, to cloth he has, design the garment made.	139
Let us our eyes to the First Love convey, so that, regarding Him, we may perchance, as far as may be, through His light make way.	142
Yet truly, (lest in thinking to advance you backward move your flight), by prayer 'tis meet, that we the flow of grace to us enhance,	145
Grace from her who can make her aid complete towards you : my words follow with loving care, and let your heart with them in concert beat."	148
Then did he thus begin his holy prayer.	151

PARADISO CANTO XXXIII

- “O Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son, 1
 humble, yet raised above creation's height,
 the end eternal counsel fixes on,
- 'Twas thou who to our nature didst unite 4
 such nobleness as made its Maker deign
 to issue from His own creative might.
- Within thy womb was kindled love again 7
 by whose warm glow, in the eternal peace,
 this flower expanded ever will remain.
- Thou, the meridian torch of love's increase 10
 to us, and among mortals there below
 a fount of living hope that will not cease.
- Lady, so great thy power is, we know, 13
 that he who seeks for grace without thy aid,
 nought but a longing without wings can show.
- Thy help not only is to him conveyed 16
 who asks for it, but oft, ere being sought
 the gift of thy benevolence is made.
- Pity and Goodness are together brought 19
 in thee, munificence, and all that may
 of virtue in created hearts be wrought.
- Now he, who to this place has made his way 22
 even from the Universe's deepest pit
 and seen all spirit-lives in their array,
- Prays thee of grace that he may be made fit 25
 in power to raise his eyes yet more on high
 towards the Bliss Supreme, and gaze on it.
- And I, who for such sight more heartily 28
 ne'er offered prayer, with all my soul entreat
 that prayer be not deemed wanting, nor passed by.
- Wherefore bid all the veiling clouds retreat 31
 of his mortality, even so that he
 through thee the Joy Supreme may view complete.
- Further I pray, O Queen, whose will may be 34
 followed by act, that his affections lose
 from that great Sight none of their sanity.

PARADISO

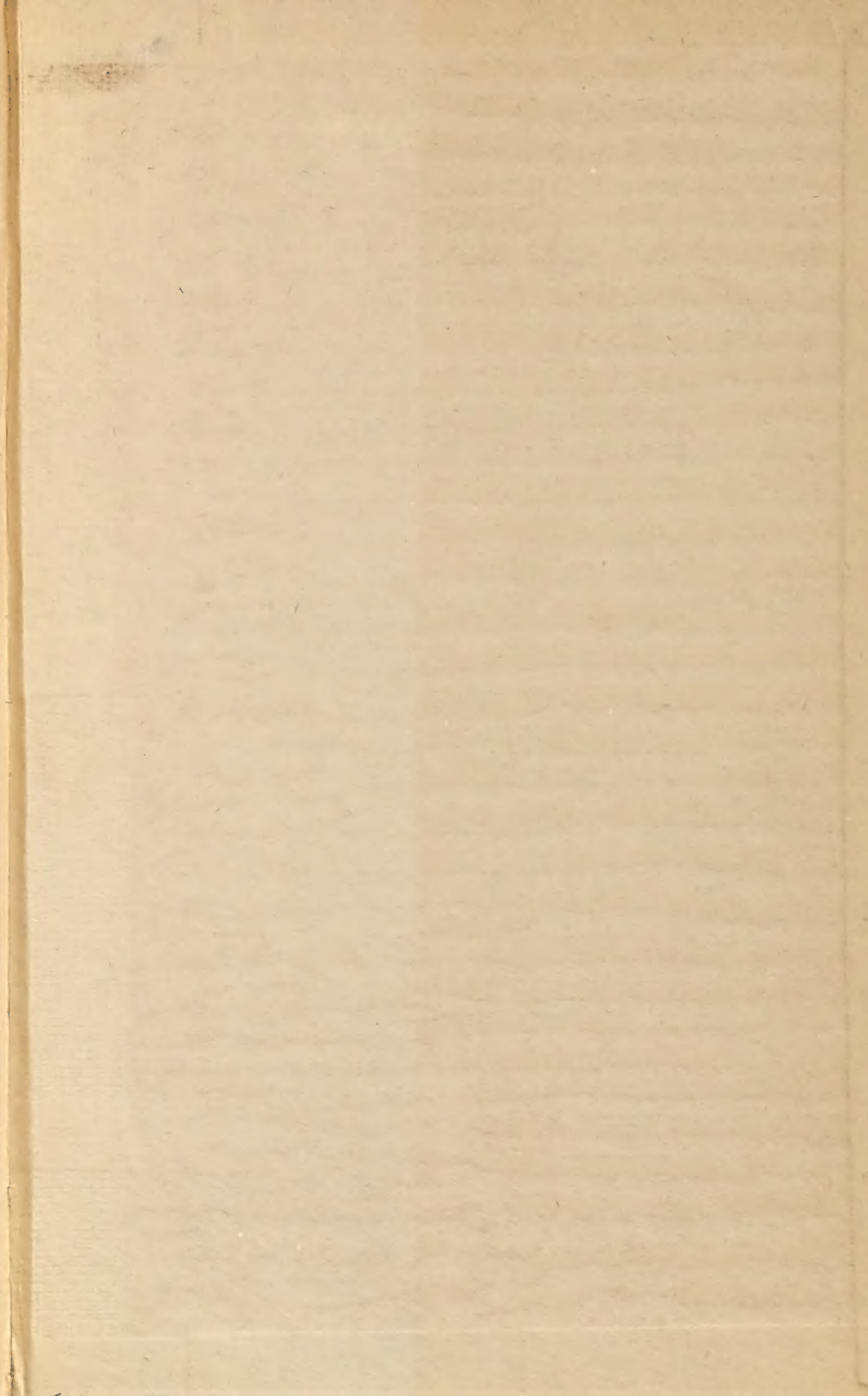
From human passions do thou keep him close : 37
 see Beatrice, and many Saints with hands
 folded, joined in my prayer as it rose."
 Those eyes of her who God's own love commands, 40
 were fixed upon the suppliant, and showed
 how glad she was at his devout demands.
 Then to the Eternal Radiance were they bowed, 43
 wherein we deem not that another eye
 to penetrate so clearly is allowed.
 And I, who saw that I was coming nigh 46
 the end of my desire, as it was meet,
 stayed within me that keen avidity.
 Bernard signed to me, and with smiling sweet 49
 led me to look above : but I before
 had done so, as he wished, that Light to greet.
 My sight becoming lucid, more and more 52
 I was enabled even to penetrate
 that Ray, which ever holds the truth in store.
 Henceforward was my power of sight so great 55
 as to exceed our speech, which yields to it,
 as memory fails of that unheard-of state.
 As one who, dreaming, has his mind all lit 58
 with passion, which remains when dreams have gone,
 and no more visions through his fancy flit,
 So am I, for the glory, that then shone 61
 upon me almost all is faded now,—
 I feel its sweetness at my heart alone.
 So does the burning Sun unseal the snow, 64
 so, on the light wind, wandering through the trees
 the records of the Sybil's wisdom go.
 O Highest Light, lifted o'er all degrees 67
 of mortal thought, give to my mind again
 some fragment of that moment's ecstasies !
 And give my tongue the power to explain 70
 even but a spark of all that glorious Ray,
 so that with those to come it may remain !
 For such awakening of my memory may, 73
 even in the feeble murmur of this song,
 more of thy glorious victory display.

PARADISO

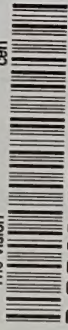
Yea, I believe that splendour shone so strong upon me that I had been lost, had I my eyes aside from its effulgence flung.	76
Thus, I remember, was I bold to try that vision long enough to let my sight meet Supreme Worth in its infinity.	79
O grace abundant, whence upon that Light eternal was my look so long imposed, that power of vision was exhausted quite !	82
In its profundity, together closed, I saw by love all in one volume bound the leaves of which the whole world is composed :	85
Substance and accident, and all that round them gather, were so fixed in one that this I speak of, in one single flame was found.	88
I saw the form that universal is of all complexity, meseems, for so to tell of it intensifies my bliss.	91
A single moment seemed to me as slow as all the centuries since Argo threw her shade on Neptune wondering below.	94
So in suspense remained my fixed view unmoved, intent, and even by that sight enkindled into wonderment anew.	97
No one so gazing on that glorious Light could ever, even in possibility, allow his look on ought else to alight :	100
For Goodness, which of will's avidity the object is, shines there complete : all things lack such perfection that outside it lie.	103
Now briefer than an infant's words, who clings to bathe his tongue upon his mother's breast, shall be my speech, even drawn from memory's springs.	106
Not that within that Light was manifest more than one single Semblance, that which now is as It was, and so doth ever rest :	109
But as my eyes began more power to show, that single Semblance, as I changed, to me seemed then more strange and wonderful to grow :	112

PARADISO

- For in that high light's clear profundity 115
appeared three circles all of equal round
and tintured differently with colours three :
Light seemed from one to the other to rebound, 118
as Iris from another Iris glows,
the third from fires of both its shining found.
O but how feeble speech is to disclose 121
my meaning ! For of what I saw to tell
it fails, and towards it less than little goes.
O Light Eternal, who dost ever dwell 124
within Thyself, self-understood, self-known,
which does Thy smiling and Thy love compel !
That Circling, which appeared as though it shone 127
before my eyes by a reflected light,
as my examining had closer grown,
Within itself with its own colours dight 130
seemed painted as in human effigy :
whereat on It I wholly fixed my sight.
As a geometer in vain may try 133
to find the measure of a Circle's space
for want of principle to fix it by,
So was I as I fondly tried to trace 136
that latest vision, and to see how there
the Image in the Circle found its place :
But my poor wings clove not such higher air, 139
only my mind was smitten as I tried
with sudden light, that seemed my wish to bear.
For that high dream the power was denied : 142
but, as a wheel rolled on that never jars,
force was to my desire and will applied
By Love that moves the Sun and all the stars. 145



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